

TOPIC HIGHLIGHT

Lynne V McFarland, PhD, Series Editor

## Editorial statement

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In the following eight articles we have provided an overview of the current research and epidemiology of two leading chronic gastrointestinal conditions that affect populations across the globe. The challenges of accurately diagnosing irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) are covered and the pathophysiology of constipation is thoroughly explored. Both standard and innovation strategies for the treatment of IBS are discussed, including 5-HT<sub>4</sub> antagonists, surgery and the use of probiotics. Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) encompasses several multifactorial conditions including Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis and pouchitis. An alarming link between IBD and colorectal cancer has been made, which heightens the importance of preventive colonoscopic screening. Treatment for IBD may involve immunomodulators, biologic agents and surgery. Technologic advances that increase the detection of etiologic agents for IBD are being developed and may help in the development of better therapeutic strategies for these complex conditions. I hope these articles will inspire clinicians and researchers to focus their efforts on preventing the development of these conditions before irreversible damage occurs and the difficult job of treating these patients is required.

- 2625 State-of-the-art of irritable bowel syndrome and inflammatory bowel disease research in 2008  
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*McCrea GL, Miaskowski C, Stotts NA, Macera L, Varma MG*
- 2639 Updates on treatment of irritable bowel syndrome  
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- 2650 Meta-analysis of probiotics for the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome  
*McFarland LV, Dublin S*
- 2662 Colorectal cancer and dysplasia in inflammatory bowel disease  
*Zisman TL, Rubin DT*
- 2670 Controversies in the treatment of Crohn's disease: The case for an accelerated step-up treatment approach  
*Shergill AK, Terdiman JP*
- 2678 Surgery for inflammatory bowel disease  
*Hwang JM, Varma MG*