

# THE EFFECT OF ALOE VERA ON PATIENTS WITH IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS) – A RANDOMIZED, DOUBLE-BLIND & PLACEBO CONTROLLED STUDY

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**Background:** There are few effective alternatives of treatment for patients with IBS. Many patients with IBS turn to alternative unconventional forms of treatment. Randomized, controlled studies regarding the efficiency of these treatments are however rare. One study indicated a positive effect of peroral treatment with Aloe Vera and many patients are reporting that they use this way of treatment for their bowel symptoms.

**Goal:** To compare the effect of Aloe Vera on patients with IBS, in a randomized, double-blind and placebo controlled study.

**Method:** After a two week screening period 68 patients with IBS were randomized according to the Rom III criteria (middle age 44 (19-69) year; 51 women) to take effervescent tablet containing 250 mg Aloe Vera (Aloe Life®) 1 x 2 or matching placebo during 4 weeks. The effect on stomach/ intestine related symptoms were evaluated by weekly scoring on the IBS Severity Scoring System (IBSSS) related to a question whether the patient experienced a satisfactory relieve of their stomach/ intestine symptoms during the past week. The patients also measured oroanal transit time (OATT) before and after the treatment as well as filling out the Hospital Anxiety and Depression (HAD) scale, for evaluation of anxiety and depression.

**Result:** The inconvenience level regarding stomach/ intestine symptoms was improved by Aloe Vera (IBSSS: 314±83 vs. 257±107; p=0,003) but not by placebo (276±88 vs. 253±100; NS) (Difference between the groups: p=0,10). The inconvenience level regarding stomach ache was improved significantly more in the Aloe Vera group than in the placebo-group (p=0,03). Higher proportion of “responders” (defined as reduction of IBSSS ≥50 points) were noticed after Aloe Vera (58%) compared with placebo (29%) (p=0.09). OATT was not influenced by the treatment and no effect was noticed regarding anxiety or depression. Aloe Vera was tolerated well by the patients and no serious side effects were noticed. All patients apart from five (four in the placebo group and one in the Aloe Vera group) completed the treatment.

**Conclusion:** Aloe Vera seems to be a promising alternative treatment of patients with IBS. Larger randomized, controlled studies are now needed in order to confirm these results and to evaluate potential mechanisms behind the positive effect of Aloe Vera on stomach/ intestine related symptoms.