

Psychosocial therapy of some benefit in recurrent abdominal pain in childhood**Clinical Question**

How effective are psychosocial interventions for recurrent abdominal pain in childhood?

Bottom Line

There was some evidence for beneficial effects of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and hypnotherapy in reducing pain in the short term in children and adolescents presenting with recurrent abdominal pain. There was little evidence of long term benefit. There was no evidence for the effectiveness of yoga therapy or written self-disclosure therapy. There were insufficient data to explore effects of treatment by recurrent abdominal pain subtype. The duration of the included studies ranged from five days to three months. There was little evidence that CBT or hypnotherapy affected school functioning, psychological well-being, or quality of life.

Caveat

Most of the interventions were relatively short in duration (four to six weeks), and very few had medium- or long-term follow-up.

Context

Between 4% and 25% of school-aged children complain of recurrent abdominal pain severe enough to interfere with their daily activities. No organic cause for this pain can be found on physical examination or investigation for the majority of such children. Although many children are managed by reassurance and simple measures, a large range of psychosocial interventions involving cognitive and behavioural components have been recommended.

Cochrane Systematic Review

[Abbott RA et al. Psychosocial interventions for recurrent abdominal pain in childhood. Cochrane Reviews, 2017, Issue 1. Art. No.: CD010971.DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD010971.pub2.](#) This review contains 18 studies involving 928 participants.