

Gastrointestinal Manifestations and Outcomes in Hospitalized COVID-19 Patients: A Retrospective Study

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Abstract : BACKGROUND: Various gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms, including diarrhea, nausea/vomiting and abdominal pain, have been reported in patients with Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). In this context, the presence of GI symptoms is variably associated with poor clinical outcomes in COVID-19. We aim to determine the outcomes of hospitalized COVID-19 patients with gastrointestinal symptoms. METHODOLOGY: This is a retrospective cohort study that used medical records of admitted COVID-19 patients from March 2020- March 2021 in a tertiary hospital in Pangasinan. Data records were evaluated for the presence of gastrointestinal manifestations, including diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain at the time of admission. Comparison between cases or COVID-19 patients presenting with GI manifestations to controls or COVID-19 patients without GI manifestation was made. RESULTS: Four hundred three patients were included in the study. Of these, 22.3% presented with gastrointestinal symptoms, while 77.7% comprised the study controls. Diarrhea was the most common GI symptom (10.4%). No statistically significant difference was observed in comorbidities and laboratory findings. Mortality was the primary outcome of the study that did not reach statistical significance between cases and controls (13.33% vs. 16.30%, $p = 0.621$). There were also no significant differences observed in the secondary outcomes, mean length of stay, (14 [12-18 days] in cases vs 14 [12- 17.5 days] in controls, $p = 0.716$) and need for mechanical ventilation (12.22% vs 16.93%, $p = 0.329$). CONCLUSION: The results of the study revealed no association of the GI symptoms to poor outcomes, including a high rate of mortality, prolonged length of stay and increased need for mechanical ventilation.

Keywords : gastrointestinal symptoms, COVID-19, outcomes, mortality, length of stay

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