Abstract:
To investigate the olfactory/gustatory functions of patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) by smell/taste tests, and to determine if disease activity or medication might influence the olfactory/gustatory functions of patients. In total, 59 IBD patients (37 Crohn’s disease (CD) and 22 ulcerative colitis (UC) patients) were studied using “Sniffin’ sticks” and “taste strips” for olfactory and gustatory tests, respectively, and compared to healthy controls and published normative data. Among IBD (CD and UC) patients, the values for odor threshold, but not for odor identification or discrimination, were significantly lower than that of the normative data. Further, these patients showed lower values than the normative taste values and the control group for all tastes, except sour; 57.6% of the IBD patients were hyposmic, while 30.5% were hypogeusic. Subjective self-assessments showed that the patients were not aware of their reduced olfactory/gustatory functions. There were no relevant differences in taste and smell abilities between the CD and UC patients. Disease activity and treatment did not influence the olfactory/gustatory functions. IBD (CD and UC) patients exhibited significant reductions in the olfactory and gustatory functions. Therefore, patients should be tested by smell/taste tests, in order to be adequately informed of their olfactory/gustatory functions and provided an understanding of how to
overcome their limitations, and thus improve their quality of life.

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