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Urinary excretion of polyethylene glycol 3350 during colonoscopy preparation.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Whole gut lavage with a polyethylene glycol electrolyte solution (PEG) is a common bowel cleansing method for diagnostic and therapeutic colon interventions. Absorption of orally administered PEG from the gastrointestinal tract in healthy human beings is generally considered to be poor. In patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), intestinal permeability and PEG absorption were previously reported to be higher than in normal subjects. In the current study, we investigated the absorption of PEG 3350 in patients undergoing routine gut lavage.

METHODS AND RESULTS: Urine specimens were collected for 8 hours in 24 patients undergoing bowel cleansing with PEG 3350 for colonoscopy. The urinary excretion of PEG 3350, measured by size exclusion chromatography, ranged between 0.01 and 0.51 % of the ingested amount, corresponding to 5.8 and 896 mg in absolute amounts, respectively. Mean PEG excretion in patients with impaired mucosa such as inflammation or ulceration of the intestine (0.24 % +/- 0.19, n = 11) was not significantly higher ($p = 0.173$) compared to that in subjects with macroscopically normal intestinal mucosa (0.13 % +/- 0.13, n = 13).

CONCLUSION: The results indicate that intestinal absorption of PEG 3350 is higher than previously assumed and underlies a strong inter-individual variation. Inflammatory changes of the intestine do not necessarily lead to a significantly higher permeability of PEG.

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