

Drossmancare Experience

A Fellows Perspective

By Peter Francisco, D.O.

Having known a limited amount of Dr. Drossman work and his staff, I was quite excited to have an opportunity to visit him and observe his clinical work currently in private practice. I spent time reading some of his recent work and seen some videos on his website in anticipation of an enlightening experience understanding functional gastrointestinal disorders.

My knowledge has been sound in regards to understanding functional GI disorders since I had seen quite a few patients thus far in my training. But learning a different approach in assessment and management of difficult patients was my main objective to coming to Dr. Drossman's clinic.

When I met with Dr. Drossman with staff and observed their work, I sensed a focus on building a strong physician/patient relationship. This is one of his tenets towards managing his patients. He emphasized patient communication and rapport is paramount in the care of patients with functional gastrointestinal disorders. It is also part of his current work with physicians in improving quality of care.

Other important principles that I learned were a better understanding of the pathophysiology of abdominal pain in these functional disorders. In particular, I saw several cases of irritable bowel syndrome and functional dyspepsia. The pain originates from the relationship between the brain gut axis. Where the process of central pain modulation is altered secondary to stressors like emotional strain that can lead to a visceral hypersensitivity of the mesenteric organs.

Explanation of this process to patients made it comprehensive to them in understanding what their illness was about. It also made it more accepting for them in trying medication that can help them.

Regarding medication, the objective based on the brain gut axis is to help restore pain modulation with medications like the SSRIs, SNRIs, and psychotropic agents. They all have mechanism of actions that work on neurotransmitters that exist in the brain but also in the digestive tract. Furthermore, while these agents have been mainly used for depression, anxiety, psychosis. Dr. Drossman has done research showing efficacy at managing visceral pain with them.

In conclusion of my visit, I generally developed a humbling appreciation on how some patients with functional gastrointestinal disorders can suffer for mainly years if the physician/patient interaction is not effective enough to diagnose and treat appropriately. I hope to build on my new knowledge and would like to thank Drossmancare for a great experience.