

# Med 341 lectures

## **Topic: Chronic Diarrhea**

### **Objectives:**

By the end of the lecture the student should be able to:

- To have an overview regarding chronic diarrhea:
  - ✓Definition
  - ✓Pathophysiology
  - ✓Classification
  
- To discuss common causes of chronic diarrhea:
  - ✓Celiac Disease
  - ✓Whipple Disease
  - ✓Tropical Sprue
  - ✓Small Bowel Bacterial Overgrowth
  - ✓Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency
  - ✓Bile Salt-Induced Diarrhea

### **Introduction:**

Chronic diarrhea is a common GI presentation. Understanding the pathophysiology of different types of chronic diarrhea is crucial. The differential diagnosis is wide, and the keys to reach the diagnosis are detailed history, physical examination and appropriate investigations.

Celiac disease is a common and important cause of chronic diarrhea. Serological, endoscopic & pathological investigation are the key to identify patients with celiac disease.

Other causes of chronic diarrhea (such as Whipple disease, small bowel bacterial overgrowth, tropical sprue, bile acid-induced diarrhea & exocrine pancreatic insufficiency) need to be considered according to the patient presentation.

### **Key Outlines:**

1. Approach to chronic diarrhea
2. Celiac Disease
3. Other causes of chronic diarrhea (Whipple disease, small bowel bacterial overgrowth, tropical sprue, bile acid-induced diarrhea & exocrine pancreatic insufficiency)

### **Take home message:**

- Chronic diarrhea (>4 weeks) can be osmotic, secretory, inflammatory or fatty diarrhea.
- Fecal osmotic gap is helpful to point toward osmotic diarrhea

- Celiac disease:

- ✓Should always be suspected in patients with iron-def anemia, diarrhea or dyspepsia.
- ✓ Serological, endoscopic & pathological investigation are the key to identify celiac disease.
- ✓Gluten-free diet is the first step in management

- Whipple Disease:

- ✓Has GI, CNS, CVS, MSK & skin manifestations. Biopsy of small bowel is of great importance.

- SBBO:

- ✓Look for & treat underlying causes
- ✓Schilling's test role in B12 def

- Tropical Sprue:

- ✓ should be suspected with history of travel to tropical area for long period

### **Recommended Books:**

Clinical Medicine: Parveen Kumar. 6 th edition.