

Abstract

The Development of the Women's Wellness Program for Irritable Bowel Syndrome [†]

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Abstract: Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a chronic, relapsing, remitting functional disorder of the gut, characterised by abdominal pain, bloating, and changes in bowel habits, and associated with poor quality of life and depression. A common disorder in primary and specialty care, IBS affects 10–18% of New Zealanders and imposes significant personal, societal, and economic burdens. Although it is a condition of both mind and body, there is no holistic support program for people with IBS in Aotearoa. This project aimed: (1) To explore the impact of IBS with affected women and their health professionals. (2) Determine whether the Australian Women's Wellness Program is adaptable, acceptable, and feasible for women in Aotearoa with IBS. (3) To codesign a prototype Women's Wellness (IBS Aotearoa) program with affected women and their clinicians ready for feasibility testing. Eligible IBS participants ($n = 15$) comprising women 18 years or over, and legally able to consent, and separately health professionals or researchers ($n = 15$) working in the field of IBS participated in an in-depth individual or focus group interview. They were asked questions about their IBS journey, including diagnosis and treatment. Their feedback detailed how IBS adversely affected all aspects of quality of life, raised issues with diagnosis and treatment and articulated desired support approaches. When given information about the Women's Wellness program and asked to provide feedback on it, all 30 interviewed participants agreed that a Women's Wellness program health promotion approach for IBS was feasible, relevant, and warranted. A lifestyle program prototype based on the Women's Wellness Program, tailored for those with IBS and led by an trained IBS health professional, is developed from these data ready for feasibility testing.

Keywords: irritable bowel syndrome; Women's Wellness; lifestyle program



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