

<i>Letter to the Editor</i>

The contribution of Greek gastroenterologists to the international clinical and basic research of inflammatory bowel disease

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Dear Sir,

We read with interest the article of Triantafillidis et al¹ concerning the contribution of Greek gastroenterologists in the international clinical and basic research of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Indeed both clinical and basic research on IBD have developed in Greece during recent decades due to the efforts of several Greek researchers. As a result of this development many studies from Greek centers have been published and Greek IBD researchers have been accepted and participate in important international IBD organizations like IOIBD and ECCO. We appreciate the effort of Triantafillidis et al¹ to summarize the results of IBD research in Greece. However, we feel that their analysis is rather incomplete and an underestimation of the contribution of some centers, including our center, exist in their article. We believe that an important point, the critical evaluation of the Greek IBD research, is absent from this paper. The number of the publications is important but more important is the validation of them according to international standards. For example the evaluation of the studies could be based on the nature of the study, the impact factor of the journal, the number of citations etc. The presentation all-together of letters to the editor, case reports, clinical studies and basic research studies does not reveal the true situation of IBD research in Greece.

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Searching PubMed with the same keywords used by the authors we failed to get the same results as those presented in this article. It seems that the authors used other criteria which are not mentioned in the paper. Using more keywords including authors' names we found that there are centers with publications on IBD (Patras, Thessaloniki) over the period of 1986-2005 which are not mentioned in this paper. Moreover, many studies from Crete, some of which appear in PubMed with the keywords used by the authors, are not reported. There are at least twelve more articles²⁻¹³ from our center which, although fulfill the criteria of the authors are not included in this paper. We think that the authors should provide us with an explanation for this or otherwise they should correct their article with the addition of these publications (ref 2-13). The truth is that the research papers from our center for the period of 1986-2005 are 40 and not 28 as reported by the authors.

Moreover, there are several papers of international collaborative studies or guidelines, with participation of Greek researchers, as well as review articles, meta-analyses and editorials which could also be mentioned as an important also contribution. Especially the participation of two centers (Ioannina and Heraklion) in the important EC-IBD studies should be reported.

In conclusion we believe that the effort of the authors is important but an improvement of the analysis of IBD research experience in Greece is necessary in order for it to develop in the future with more important pioneering studies.

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