Submit a Manuscript: http://www.wjgnet.com/esps/ Help Desk: http://www.wjgnet.com/esps/helpdesk.aspx DOI: 10.3748/wjg.v22.i12.3486 World J Gastroenterol 2016 March 28; 22(12): 3486-3495 ISSN 1007-9327 (print) ISSN 2219-2840 (online) © 2016 Baishideng Publishing Group Inc. All rights reserved.

META-ANALYSIS

Helicobacter pylori eradication therapy for functional dyspepsia: Systematic review and meta-analysis

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Conflict-of-interest statement: The authors have no conflict-of-interest to declare.

Data sharing statement: No additional data are available.

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Received: November 30, 2015 Peer-review started: December 1, 2015 First decision: December 21, 2015 Revised: January 19, 2016 Accepted: January 30, 2016

Article in press: January 30, 2016 Published online: March 28, 2016

Abstract

AIM: To evaluate whether *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) eradication therapy benefits patients with functional dyspepsia (FD).

METHODS: Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) investigating the efficacy and safety of *H. pylori* eradication therapy for patients with functional dyspepsia published in English (up to May 2015) were identified by searching PubMed, EMBASE, and The Cochrane Library. Pooled estimates were measured using the fixed or random effect model. Overall effect was expressed as a pooled risk ratio (RR) or a standard mean difference (SMD). All data were analyzed with Review Manager 5.3 and Stata 12.0.

RESULTS: This systematic review included 25 RCTs with a total of 5555 patients with FD. Twenty-three of these studies were used to evaluate the benefits of H. pylori eradication therapy for symptom improvement; the pooled RR was 1.23 (95%CI: 1.12-1.36, P < 0.0001). *H. pylori* eradication therapy demonstrated symptom improvement during long-term follow-up at \geq 1 year (RR = 1.24; 95%CI: 1.12-1.37, P < 0.0001) but not during short-term follow-up at < 1 year (RR = 1.26; 95%CI: 0.83-1.92, P = 0.27). Seven studies showed no benefit of *H. pylori* eradication therapy on quality of life with an SMD of -0.01 (95%CI: -0.11 to 0.08, P = 0.80). Six studies demonstrated that *H. pylori* eradication therapy reduced the development of peptic ulcer disease compared to no eradication therapy (RR = 0.35; 95%CI: 0.18-0.68, P = 0.002). Eight studies showed that H. pylori eradication therapy increased the likelihood of treatment-related side effects compared to no eradication therapy (RR = 2.02; 95%CI: 1.12-3.65, P = 0.02). Ten studies demonstrated that patients who received H. pylori eradication therapy were more likely to obtain histologic resolution of chronic gastritis compared to those who did not receive eradication

therapy (RR = 7.13; 95%CI: 3.68-13.81, P < 0.00001).

CONCLUSION: The decision to eradicate *H. pylori* in patients with functional dyspepsia requires individual assessment.

Key words: Functional dyspepsia; *Helicobacter pylori* eradication; Symptom improvement; Quality of life; Peptic ulceration; Meta-analysis

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Core tip: The decision to eradicate *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) in patients with functional dyspepsia requires individual assessment. This meta-analysis suggests that *H. pylori* eradication therapy is beneficial for symptom relief, reduces the development of peptic ulceration, and leads to histologic resolution of chronic gastritis but does not improve the quality of life and may even result in adverse events. Otherwise, other validated treatment such as acid suppression, prokinetics, and psychiatric treatment should also be considered.

Du LJ, Chen BR, Kim JJ, Kim S, Shen JH, Dai N. *Helicobacter pylori* eradication therapy for functional dyspepsia: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *World J Gastroenterol* 2016; 22(12): 3486-3495 Available from: URL: http://www.wjgnet.com/1007-9327/full/v22/i12/3486.htm DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3748/wjg.v22.i12.3486

INTRODUCTION

Functional dyspepsia (FD) is a common gastrointestinal disorder and affects as many as 21%^[1] of the population worldwide and 2%-24%^[2,3] of the Chinese population. Characterized by epigastric pain, postprandial fullness, and early satiation without organic causes, FD adversely impacts the patient's quality of life. FD is diagnosed by Rome III criteria, which are symptom-based criteria^[4]. Although the pathophysiology is not well established, gastro-duodenal motility dysfunction^[5,6], visceral hypersensitivity^[7,8], and psychological disturbance^[9] may play a role in the pathogenesis of FD. Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) infection is more common in patients with dyspepsia (OR = 2.3; 95%CI: 1.9-2.7) in comparison to healthy controls^[10]. However, the effects of *H. pylori* eradication therapy in FD are inconsistent in previously published randomized trials and meta-

Previous meta-analyses mainly focused on symptom improvement after $H.\ pylori$ eradication therapy; their findings (whether or not to eradicate) were not consistent because of variable study designs and follow-up durations^[11-13]. One meta-analysis conducted by Moayyedi et $al^{[14]}$ provided an economic evaluation and suggested that $H.\ pylori$ eradication therapy is the most cost-effective treatment method. We carried out

this meta-analysis not only to evaluate benefits of *H. pylori* eradication therapy for symptom relief, but also to discuss the effects on the quality of life, adverse events, and the risk of subsequent peptic ulcer disease. We performed a more comprehensive meta-analysis than previous studies in order to assess the overall clinical impact of *H. pylori* eradication therapy in this population.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Search strategy

A standard protocol, based on current PRISMA guide-lines, was implemented for study inclusion, data extraction, and data analysis. PubMed, EMBASE, and The Cochrane Library were searched for published randomized controlled trials (RCTs) in English from 1988 to 2015. The main search strategies were as follows: "Helicobacter pylori OR Campylobacter OR Campylobacter pylori OR C. pylori OR Helicobacter infection" AND "treat OR eradication OR eradicating OR therapy OR anti-" AND "dyspepsia OR functional gastrointestinal disorder OR non-ulcer dyspepsia OR functional dyspepsia."

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Studies were considered eligible if they met the following criteria: (1) RCTs; (2) study population of patients with dyspepsia (symptom-based criteria including ROME I , II , or III) and *H. pylori* infection (¹³C breath test, histology, or rapid urease teat); (3) *H. pylori* eradication regimens (dual, triple, quadruple, and sequential therapies) as intervention for treatment group and placebo or other drugs known not to eradicate *H. pylori* (no antibiotics or bismuth) as intervention for control groups; and (4) age above 17 years old. Studies were excluded if they were available only as abstracts, review studies, case reports, or if predefined outcome data required for analyses were lacking.

Data extraction and quality evaluation

Two investigators (Du LJ, Chen BR) reviewed all the titles and abstracts independently. Data was extracted from eligible full-text studies. The data included study population, demographical characteristics, year of publication, country, age, gender, *H. pylori* eradication regimens, duration of follow-up, *H. pylori* eradication rate, and study outcomes. The individual study quality was assessed according to the Cochrane collaboration's tool for risk of bias, which contains random sequence generation, allocation concealment, blindness, incomplete outcome data, selective outcome reporting, and other biases. Any disagreement was resolved by a third investigator (Dai N).

Study endpoints

The primary outcome for this study was the pooled risk ratio (RR) of successful treatment (presence



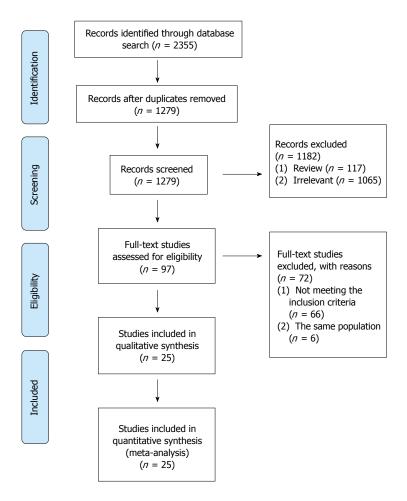


Figure 1 Study flow diagram.

of no more than mild pain or discomfort after treatment) with a 95%CI. The secondary outcomes were the pooled RR of improvement of dyspepsia at shortterm (< 1 year) and long-term (≥ 1 year) followup, standard mean difference (SMD) of improvement in quality of life (SF-36), pooled RR of incidence of peptic ulceration during follow-up, pooled RR of development of treatment-related adverse events, and pooled RR of histologic resolution of chronic gastritis. If the studies were homogeneous (I^2 < 50%), the fixed-effects model was used; otherwise $(I^2 > 50\%)$, the random-effects model was chosen. Intervention was considered statistically significant when a P-value was < 0.05. If the studies were heterogeneous, a sensitivity analysis was performed. Publication bias was assessed by the funnel plot. All data were analyzed with RevMan 5.3 and Stata 12.0. The statistical methods of this study were reviewed by professor Yun-Xian Yu from Department of Epidemiology and Health Statistics of Zhejiang University.

RESULTS

Literature search and description of included studies According to the search strategy, 2355 citations were identified from three databases. After removing the

duplicates (n=1076), two reviewers screened the titles and abstracts of potentially relevant studies (n=1279) independently. Out of 97 full-text studies that were reviewed, 66 did not meet the inclusion criteria. Twenty-five RCTs with a total of 5555 people Which met the inclusion criteria were included in this systematic review (Figure 1)^[15-39]. The assessment on the quality of the individual study is shown in Figure 2. The demographic data, eradication regimens, and eradication rates are listed in Table 1.

Benefits of H. pylori eradication therapy on symptom improvement

Twenty-three of 25 studies reported information on treatment success. Eradication therapy groups were treated with antibiotics, proton pump inhibitors, and bismuth, while control groups were treated with placebo, prokinetics, and/or proton pump inhibitors. Primary analysis demonstrated that 1183 (40%) of 2939 patients in the eradication therapy group and 795 (32%) of 2468 in the control groups had no or mild symptoms during the last follow-up visit (pooled RR = 1.23; 95%CI: 1.12-1.36, P < 0.0001). Although there was no significant heterogeneity ($I^2 = 42\%$) among the selected studies, the asymmetry in the funnel plot (Figure 3) indicated existing publication bias. H. pylori eradication therapy demonstrated

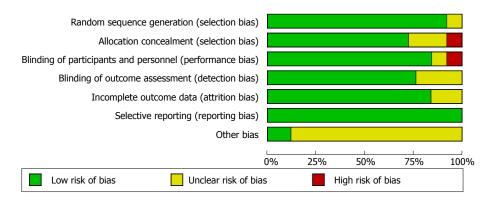


Figure 2 Risk of bias graph. The Cochrane collaboration's tool was used to evaluate risk of bias.

Study	Sample (M/F)	Age, mean	Country	Last visit (mo)	Intervention	Helicobacter pylori eradication
Ang, 2006	130 (47/83)	38.0	Singapore	12	LAC	73.2%
Blum, 1998	328 (136/192)	47.0	Global	12	OAC	79%
Chiba, 2002	394 (148/246)	49.5	Canada	12	OMC	75%
Dhali, 1999	62 (44/18)	32.5	India	12	ВМТе	87.5%
Froehlich, 2001	144 (64/80)	44.6	Switzerland	12	LAC	75%
Gisbert, 2004	50 (15/35)	41.5	Spain	12	OAC	76%
Greenberg, 1999	100 (31/69)	46.5	United States	12	OC	70.5%
Gwee, 2009	82 (38/44)	40.4	Singapore	12	OCT	68.3%
Hsu, 2001	161 (78/83)	50.9	China	12	LMTe	78%
Koelz, 2003	181 (74/107)	47.5	Switzerland	6	AO	51.7%
Koskenpato, 2001	151 (52/99)	51.7	Finland	12	AMO	82%
Lan, 2011	195 (89/106)	47.4	China	3	RAC	85.7%
Malfertheiner, 2003	800 (380/420)	46.2	Germany	12	LAC	63.9%
Mazzoleni, 2006	89 (20/69)	41.3	Brazil	12	LAC	91.3%
Mazzoleni, 2011	404 (86/318)	46.0	Brazil	12	OAC	88.6%
McColl, 1998	318 (155/163)	42.1	United Kingdom	12	AMO	88%
Miwa, 2000	85 (40/45)	51.5	Japan	3	OAC	85.4%
Naeeni, 2002	157 (47/110)	32.5	Iran	9	ABM	52.6%
Sodhi, 2013	519 (169/350)	44.5	India	12	OAC	69.9%
Talley, 1999	293 (133/160)	46.4	United States	12	LCA	80%
Talley, 1999 (ORCHID)	275 (98/177)	50.0	Australia	12	OAC	85%
Varannes, 2001	253 (112/141)	51.0	France	12	RaAC	69%
Varasa, 2008	48 (21/27)	37.0	Spain	12	RA	81.4%
Xu, 2013	396 (135/261)	40.0	China	12	ACE	76.36%
Zanten, 2003	157 (72/81)	48.0	Canada	12	LCA	82%

M/F: Male/female; A: Amoxillin; B: Bismuth salt; C: Clarithromycin; E: Esoprazole; F: Furazolidone; L: Lansoprazole; M: Metronidizole; O: Omeprazole; R: Rabeprazole; Ra: Ranitidine; T: Tinidazole; Te: Tetracycline.

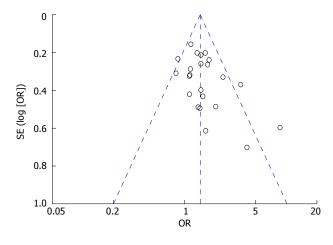


Figure 3 Funnel plot of included studies for potential publication bias. The funnel plot was not absolutely symmetrical.

symptom improvement at long-term (\geqslant 1 year) (RR = 1.24; 95%CI: 1.12-1.37, P < 0.0001) but not at short-term (< 1 year) (RR = 1.26; 95%CI: 0.83-1.92, P = 0.27) follow-up. The studies that reported short-term outcomes demonstrated significant heterogeneity ($I^2 = 64\%$). The forest plot and sensitivity analysis are shown in Figures 4 and 5, respectively.

Benefits of H. pylori eradication therapy on quality of life Seven studies reported data on quality of life both at baseline and at the last visit required for the meta-analysis. Five trials used the SF-36, one used the general well-being index, and one used QoL-PEI. A fixed effect model ($I^2 = 0\%$) was performed on all seven studies. Overall, H. pylori eradication therapy had no significant benefit on quality of life, with an

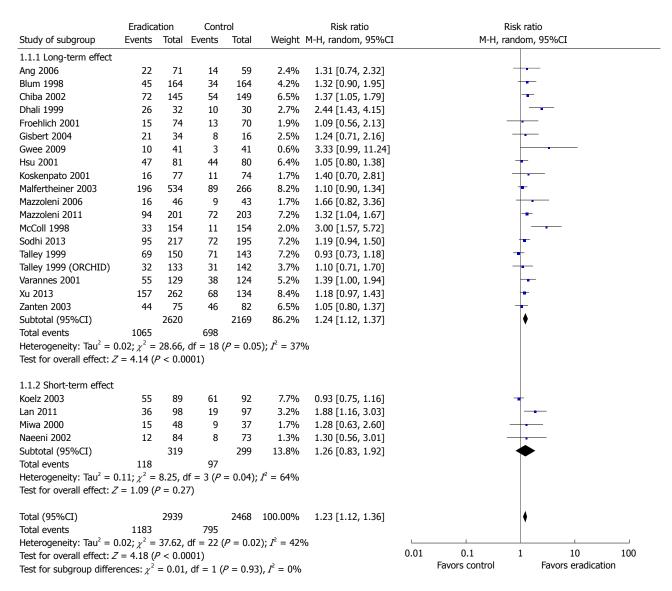


Figure 4 Forest plot of the effects comparing *Helicobacter pylori* eradication therapy vs control on symptom relief. Twenty-three studies were included. The random effect model (Mantel-Haenszel method) was applied.

SMD of -0.01 (95%CI: -0.11 to 0.08, P = 0.80). Detailed information is shown in Figure 6.

Benefits of H. pylori eradication therapy on long-term peptic ulceration

Six studies reported endoscopic data at the last visit to evaluate for the development of peptic ulcer disease. H. pylori eradication therapy compared to no eradication therapy reduced the development of peptic ulcer disease (RR = 0.35; 95%CI: 0.18-0.68, P = 0.002). There was no significant study heterogeneity (I^2 = 0%). Detailed information is shown in Figure 7.

H. pylori eradication therapy on the development of adverse events

Eight studies provided data on development of common side effects associated with the intervention. Patients who received *H. pylori* eradication therapy were more likely to have side effects compared to controls (RR

= 2.02; 95%CI: 1.12-3.65, P = 0.02). The random effect model was used because significant study heterogeneity ($I^2 = 94\%$) was detected. The forest plot and sensitivity analysis are shown in Figures 8 and 9.

Other outcomes comparing H. pylori eradication therapy and control groups

One study provided outcome data on the cost of interventions such as medication, diagnostic tests, and physician consultation and did not demonstrate a difference between eradication therapy and the control^[38]. However, the cost of intervention from this study was derived from utilization of healthcare services rather than the actual cost. Ten studies reported histological outcomes following intervention (Figure 10). Patients who received *H. pylori* eradication therapy were more likely to obtain histologic resolution of chronic gastritis compared to control (RR = 7.13; 95%CI: 3.68-13.81, P < 0.00001).

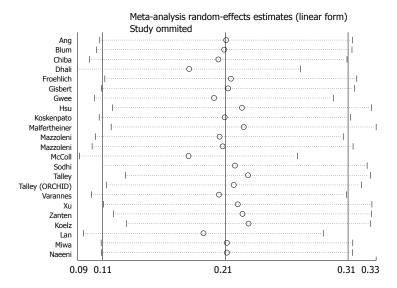


Figure 5 Sensitivity analysis of the effects comparing Helicobacter pylori eradication therapy vs control on symptom relief.

	Eradication			Control				Std. mean difference	Std. mean difference		
Study of subgroup	Mean	SD	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Weight	IV, fixed, 95%CI	IV, fi	xed, 95%CI	
Blum 1998	5.9	1.05	164	6	0.89	164	20.1%	-0.10 [-0.32, 0.11]		_	
Froehlich 2001	5.2	8.5	74	5.5	8.9	70	8.8%	-0.03 [-0.36, 0.29]	-		
Koskenpato 2001	29.6	48.7	77	38.7	77.6	74	9.2%	-0.14 [-0.46, 0.18]		_	
Mazzoleni 2011	5.44	14.66	203	5.1	13.7	201	24.7%	0.02 [-0.17, 0.22]	-	-	
McColl 1998	46	112.3	154	49	107.7	154	18.9%	-0.03 [-0.25, 0.20]	-	_	
Varannes 2001	1.9	1.36	129	1.8	1.44	124	15.5%	0.07 [-0.18, 0.32]	+	_	
Varasa 2008	67.1	26.6	27	55.4	25.2	21	2.8%	0.44 [-0.14, 1.02]	_	•	
Total (95%CI)	4 27 46	6 (0 0	828	00/		808	100.0%	-0.01 [-0.11, 0.08]	•	,	
Heterogeneity: $\chi^2 = 4.27$, df = 6 ($P = 0.64$); $I^2 = 0\%$ Test for overall effect: $Z = 0.25$ ($P = 0.80$)								-2 Favo	-1 0 ors eradication	1 Favors control	2

Figure 6 Forest plot of the effects comparing Helicobacter pylori eradication therapy vs control on quality of life. Seven studies were included. The fixed effect model (Inverse Variance method) was applied.

DISCUSSION

Our meta-analysis based on well-designed RCTs demonstrated that the effect size of symptom relief from H. pylori eradication therapy in patients with FD was small (RR = 1.23; 95%CI: 1.12-1.36, P < 0.0001) with an undetectable short-term benefit. Eradication therapy was nearly three times more likely to reduce the development of peptic ulcer disease compared with no eradication therapy. Furthermore, histologic findings of chronic gastritis were more likely to resolve after H. pylori eradication therapy compared to controls. However, H. pylori eradication therapy did not improve the quality of life for patients with FD compared to anti-acids, prokinetics, or placebo therapy. Eradication therapy was also more likely to be associated with side effects (RR = 2.02; 95%CI: 1.12-3.65, P = 0.02) compared to control.

H. pylori infection is more prevalent in Asia than in Western countries with high prevalence observed in China and South Korea^[40]. Eradication therapy appears to be more effective in Asian populations as shown by the meta-analysis conducted by Jin and Li^[13] on the Chinese population. Their study showed that H. pylori

eradication therapy compared to controls increased the likelihood of improvement in dyspeptic symptoms by 3.6-fold. Another meta-analysis performed by Zhao *et al*^[12] found that *H. pylori* eradication therapy compared to no eradication therapy was beneficial for improvement of dyspepsia in European (OR = 1.49; 95 CI% 1.10-2.02) and American populations (OR = 1.43; 95%CI: 1.12-1.83).

H. pylori is strongly associated with many diseases, including functional dyspepsia, gastric or duodenal ulcer, gastric cancer, and gastric mucosa-associated lymphoid tissue lymphoma^[41,42]. However, H. pyloriinduced gastritis is the most important risk factor for development of peptic ulcer disease^[43]. Most patients with H. pylori infection have asymptomatic gastritis, and experience variable clinical symptoms depending on bacteria, host, and environmental factors. Whether H. pylori infection delays gastric emptying is unclear^[44,45], but *H. pylori* appears to alter gastric acid production by changing gastrin and somatostatin secretion^[46]. Abnormal gastric acid secretion causes mainly dysmotility-like, dyspeptic symptoms^[47]. Duodenal acid exposure indirectly induces fullness, bloating, and epigastric pain by suppressing antral



	Eradication		Control			Risk ratio		Risk	atio		
Study of subgroup	Events	Total	Events	Total	Weight	M-H, fixed, 95%CI		M-H, fixe	d, 95%CI		
Blum 1998	1	164	6	164	18.4%	0.17 [0.02, 1.37]		-	+		
Greenberg 1999	1	50	3	50	9.2%	0.33 [0.04, 3.10]		-			
Hsu 2001	2	81	6	80	18.5%	0.33 [0.07, 1.58]			+		
Koelz 2003	0	92	1	89	4.7%	0.32 [0.01, 7.82]	_	•		•	
Mazzoleni 2011	4	201	9	203	27.5%	0.45 [0.14, 1.43]			+		
Talley 1999	3	170	7	167	21.7%	0.42 [0.11, 1.60]			_		
Total (95%CI)		758		753	100.0%	0.35 [0.18, 0.68]		•			
Total events	11		32					•			
Heterogeneity: $\chi^2 =$	0.73, df = 5	5(P = 0.9)	98); $I^2 = 0\%$								
Test for overall effect: $Z = 3.08 (P = 0.002)$							0.01	0.1 Favors eradication	1 Favors o	10 control	100

Figure 7 Forest plot of the effects comparing *Helicobacter pylori* eradication therapy vs control on long-term peptic ulceration. Six studies were included. The fixed effect (Inverse Variance method) model was applied.

	Eradica	tion	Contro	ol	Risk ratio			Risk ratio	
Study of subgroup	Events	Total	Events	Total	Weight	M-H, random, 95%C	Ι	M-H, random, 95%CI	
Ang 2006	4	71	3	59	7.9%	1.11 [0.26, 4.75]			
Blum1998	63	169	10	176	12.8%	6.56 [3.48, 12.35]			
Chiba 2002	61	145	62	149	14.5%	1.01 [0.77, 1.32]		-	
Dhali 1999	12	32	7	30	11.8%	1.61 [0.73, 3.53]		 •	
Malfertheiner 2003	94	534	9	266	12.6%	5.20 [2.67, 10.15]			
Mazzoleni 2011	172	185	146	178	14.9%	1.13 [1.05, 1.23]		•	
Miwa 2000	17	48	10	37	12.7%	1.31 [0.68, 2.52]			
Varannes 2001	36	129	12	124	12.9%	2.88 [1.57, 5.28]		_ -	
Total (95%CI)		1313		1019	100.0%	2.02 [1.12, 3.65]		•	
Total events	459		259						
Heterogeneity: $Tau^2 = 0.61$; $\chi^2 = 116.32$, df = 7 ($P < 0.00001$); $I^2 = 94\%$									
Test for overall effect			•		•		0.01	0.1 1 10 Favors eradication Favors control	100

Figure 8 Forest plot of the effects comparing Helicobacter pylori eradication therapy vs control on adverse events. Eight studies were included. The random effect model (Mantel-Haenszel method) was applied.

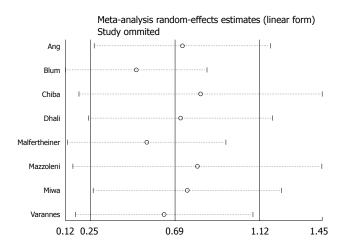


Figure 9 Sensitivity analysis of the effects comparing Helicobacter pylori eradication therapy vs control on adverse events.

contractions, which may contribute to delayed gastric emptying $^{[48,49]}$.

According to the results of this meta-analysis, decision to eradicate *H. pylori* may be influenced by several key points. First, eradication therapy may be preferable among patients with risk factors for peptic ulcer disease or gastric cancer. Our study showed long-term benefits such as reduction in incidence of

future peptic ulcer disease and resolution of gastritis, which are associated with gastric cancer^[50,51]. Second, because of apparent adverse effects associated with eradication therapy, alternative validated therapy for FD such as acid suppression, prokinetics, or lifestyle changes for mild dyspeptic symptoms should also be considered. A large study of 1425 patients showed that *H. pylori* infection was a significant risk factor for



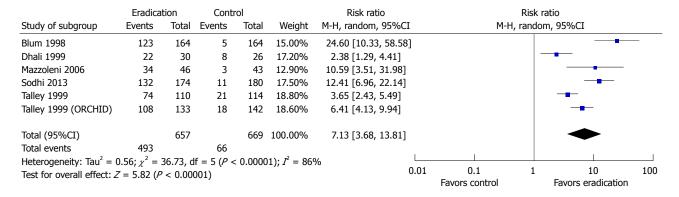


Figure 10 Forest plot of the effects comparing Helicobacter pylori eradication therapy vs control on histologic resolution of chronic gastritis. Six studies were included. The random effect model (Mantel-Haenszel method) was applied.

dyspepsia. However, other factors such as NSAIDs use, unemployment, and heavy smoking demonstrated larger magnitude of association compared to Hpylori infection^[52]. Furthermore, rising prevalence of antibiotics resistance^[53] and *H. pylori* reinfection^[54] cannot be ignored. Third, it has been well established that the presence of psychiatric disorders, such as anxiety disorder, is more common in patients with functional gastrointestinal disorders than in the general population^[55,56]. Psychiatric treatment with antidepressants is helpful in the reduction of dyspeptic symptoms^[57]. Anxiety and depression are considered to be the best predictors of quality of life^[58]. Cognitivebehavioral therapy (CBT), psychotherapy, anxiolytics, and antidepressants can also relieve dyspeptic $symptoms^{[59,60]}.\\$

The strength of this meta-analysis includes a comprehensive analysis of high-quality studies with evaluation of various FD outcomes other than symptom improvement alone. There are some limitations to this meta-analysis. First, some well-designed studies were excluded because they were published in non-English language. Second, the random effect model was chosen to evaluate the short-term symptom improvement and development of adverse events in the presence of significant study heterogeneity resulting from different study designs and methods. Third, there is a possibility of publication bias as we excluded some RCTs that did not have sufficient data for meta-analysis or were not published in manuscript form at the time of submission.

In conclusion, *H. pylori* eradication therapy compared to no eradication therapy has a statistically significant but small magnitude of benefit for symptom relief and can also reduce the development of peptic ulcer disease. However, *H. pylori* eradication therapy was associated with higher incidence of adverse events during the treatment and failed to demonstrate any effect in improving the quality of life. In addition to *H. pylori* eradication therapy, alternative therapies such as acid-suppression, prokinetics, psychotherapy, and anxiolytics should also be considered after an individualized assessment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank professor Yun-Xian Yu for reviewing the statistical methods of this study.

COMMENTS

Background

Functional dyspepsia (FD) is a common gastrointestinal disorder and affects as many as 21% of the population worldwide. *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) infection is one of the most important factors for development of dyspeptic symptoms.

Research frontiers

Benefits of *H. pylori* eradication therapy in patients with FD are not consistent. Relying on antibiotics may lead to an increased rate of drug resistance, which may consequently lead to an increased rate of eradication failure.

Innovations and breakthroughs

Compared to previous studies, the current meta-analysis included additional clinical outcomes on the benefits of *H. pylori* eradication therapy other than symptom relief such as quality of life, adverse events, and development of peptic ulceration.

Applications

According to the current meta-analysis, *H. pylori* eradication therapy should be considered after individual assessment. The authors have highlighted that *H. pylori* eradication therapy was significantly beneficial for symptom relief and reduced the risk of development of peptic ulceration in patients with functional dyspepsia. However, *H. pylori* eradication therapy failed to improve the quality of life and was associated with higher likelihood of treatment-related adverse effects. Otherwise, alternative validated therapies such as acid suppression, prokinetics, and psychiatric treatment should also be considered.

Peer-review

The conclusions are warranted by the results, and it is a useful meta-analysis.

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ISSN 1007-9327

