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### **Functional constipation in children: a literature review**

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**Background and Aim:** Functional constipation is defined by difficult, infrequent defecation or abnormal stool volume or consistency, in the absence of an anatomical or biochemical cause. Although the prevalence of functional constipation in children can be up to 30%, this is a frequently underestimated disease due to its benignity. This review aims to understand the etiology, diagnosis and treatment of functional constipation in children.

**Methods:** Literature search in Medline, UpToDate, National Guideline Clearinghouse and Index of Portuguese Medical Journals, until April 2015, with the MeSH terms «Constipation»; «Constipation in children»; «Infant, Newborn»; «Infant»; «Child, Preschool»; «Child»; «Adolescent»; «Encopresis»; «Toilet training».

**Review Body:** Functional constipation in children is etiologically related to painful defecation, which leads to voluntary withholding of stools and fecal incontinence. The diagnosis is clinical, after excluding symptoms and signs that could point to an organic cause of constipation. Management includes dietetic, behavioral and pharmacologic treatment, with osmotic laxatives being the most effective and safe option. Dietetic and behavioral treatment, are effective only when used combined with pharmacologic treatment.

**Conclusion:** Given the proximity of family doctor to community, he's in a privileged position to diagnose and treat functional constipation in children. However more studies long term safety and efficacy of treatment are necessary to establish more powerful strength of recommendation.