**THEORY:**
IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS) is a chronic gastrointestinal (GI) condition characterized by symptoms such as abdominal pain, flatulence, changes in bowel habits and bloating. Although it affects millions of individuals globally, the etiology of IBS has not yet been determined; however, factors such as genetic predisposition, infections, psychologic stress, visceral hypersensitivity and changes in the brain-gut axis are believed to play a significant role. Is it possible the therapeutic benefits of probiotics could aid diarrhea-predominant IBS (IBS-D)?

**PARAMETERS:**
IN A DOUBLE-BLIND, placebo-controlled clinical trial, 36 newly diagnosed male and female IBS-D patients ages 18 to 55 were enrolled in three clinical centers. Along with standard care of treatment, 18 patients received placebo and 18 received *B. coagulans* MTCC 5856 tablet (as LactoSpore® from Sabinsa) containing $2 \times 10^9$ cfu/day for 90 days; 31 subjects completed the study, with four subjects voluntarily withdrawing from the placebo group and one from the active group. Clinical symptoms of IBS were considered as primary endpoint measures and were evaluated through questionnaires. The visual analog scale (VAS) was used for abdominal pain. Physician’s global assessment and IBS quality of life were considered as secondary efficacy measures and were monitored through questionnaires.

**OUTCOME:**
Compared to placebo, the LactoSpore group showed:

- A significant **DECREASE** in clinical symptoms such as GI discomfort, bloating, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and stool frequency
- **DECREASED** disease severity (i.e., physician’s global assessment)
- A **SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT** (p<0.01) in quality of life by day 60 of the study, maintained through study’s end at day 90

**IMPACT:**
IBS affects an estimated 7 to 21 percent of the general population, substantially reducing quality of life and work productivity. Although it is among the most common GI disorders worldwide, treatment options for IBS-D remain limited. Probiotics have shown potential to confer myriad benefits to gut health. This is the first study on the use of *B. coagulans* MTCC 5856 in IBS-D. The results indicated LactoSpore may be a potential agent in IBS-D management. Sabinsa has a Health Canada claim stating, “LactoSpore helps relieve abdominal pain associated with IBS.”