

Enhancing IBD Management: The Benefits and Challenges of Home Faecal Calprotectin Testing for Patients and Clinicians

INTRODUCTION

Faecal calprotectin (FC) is a biomarker that plays a crucial role in monitoring intestinal inflammation in patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

Traditional laboratory-based FC testing has proven effective, but emerging point-of-care (PoC) testing offer promising benefits. This study analyses patient feedback on the use of PoC testing to understand their potential impact on patient experience and disease management and assess accuracy and reliability compared to standard lab based testing

METHODS

We undertook a survey of 25 IBD patients to provide feedback on the use of PoC testing to understand their potential impact on patient experience and disease management. Patients were provided a link to educational material with the PoC test

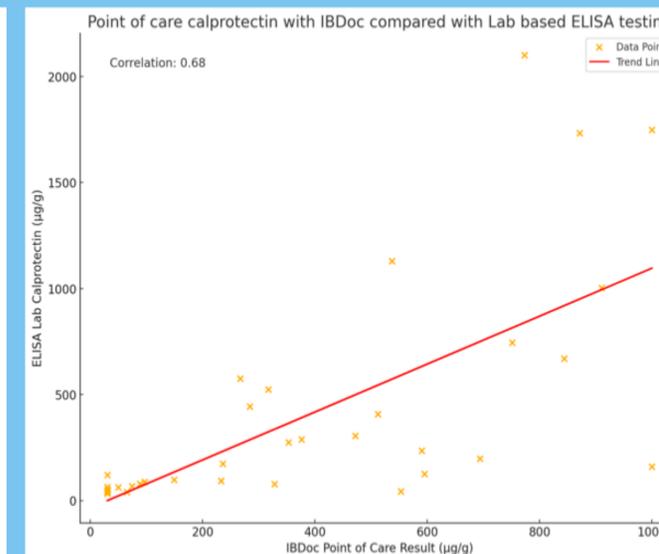
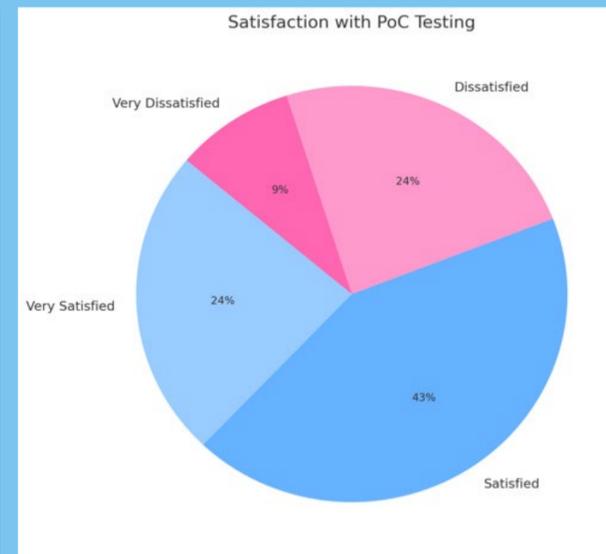
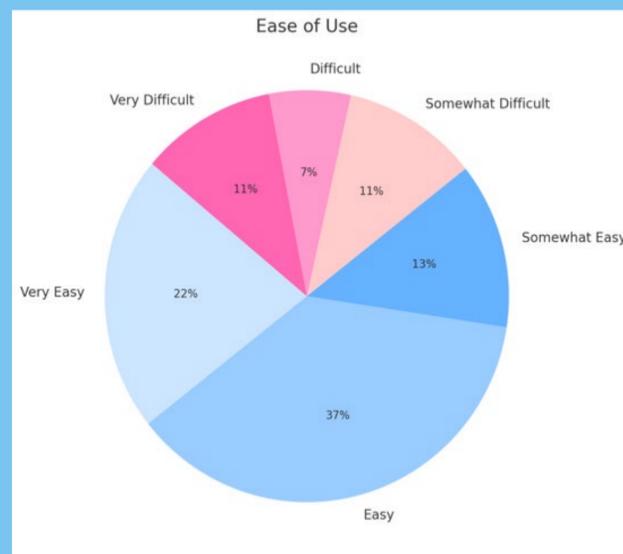
A subsequent validation study was completed. 36 patient's completed 2 stool samples. One sample was completed at home using the PoC test and the other was sent for standard lab based ELISA testing. The results were then correlated.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Potential to reduce need for clinic visits and support care closer to home and self-management
- Empowers patients, supports patient autonomy and patient engagement in disease monitoring
- Facilitate timely assessment and earlier management of disease flares

RESULTS

- Overall satisfaction of the PoC test were good, with 67% of patients either satisfied or very satisfied.
- A significant portion (76%) of the patients reported that the home testing process was "easy" or "somewhat easy," reflecting high levels of accessibility and patient satisfaction
- Of those surveyed, 62% expressed a preference for PoC testing over traditional laboratory methods, citing its convenience and time efficiency.
- Of 412 kits provided to patients over an 8-month period, only 44.6% of kits were returned for analysis, which is lower than reported rates of return for standard lab-based results.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Overall response to PoC testing was positive, but there are clear areas for improvement:
 - Dissatisfaction rate (33%) indicates the need for better patient education and support.
 - The return rate overall was lower than expected and a comprehensive patient education program should be developed to improve confidence in use of technology, improve compliance and overall satisfaction and ensure a cost-efficient use of resources.
- Correlation between the PoC test and lab based was reasonable, but larger studies validating the PoC test with lab-based testing to demonstrate accuracy and reliability of home tests are needed to improve both patient and clinician confidence in their use to optimise patient care.
- Improving communication between healthcare providers and patients is also essential. Offering clear instructions and real-time support, perhaps through digital platforms, may enhance the overall user experience.
- Ongoing monitoring and feedback mechanisms should be implemented to refine the home testing kits further, ensuring they are as user-friendly and accessible as possible.