



Functional symptoms in the general population - diary versus questionnaire

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Background

Diagnosis of functional gastrointestinal disorders (FGIDs) often relies on patient self-report of symptoms^[1]. Self-report of health^[2] and gastrointestinal^[3] conditions have been shown to be unreliable. Poor quality of symptom self-reports may lead to diagnostic inaccuracies in FGIDs.

Aims

Rome III diagnosis of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) relies on three key criteria. We aimed to evaluate concordance between patient questionnaire recall and prospective diary records of:

1. Occurrence of abdominal pain
2. Occurrence of pain relieved by defecation
3. Change in stool form or frequency with pain

Methods

Subjects

n=256 randomly selected community members who had previously undergone colonoscopy agreed to complete a 7-day stool and symptom diary.

Measures

The abdominal symptom questionnaire (ASQ)^[4]. A stool diary^[5]: meals, GI symptoms and stool characteristics hourly for 7 days (see below).

Statistics

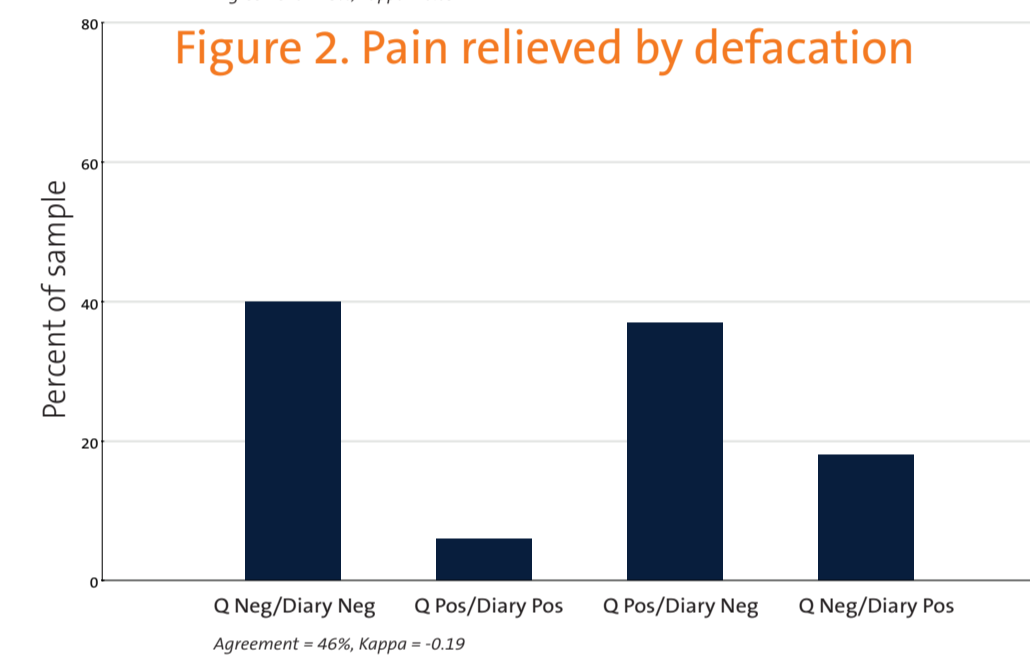
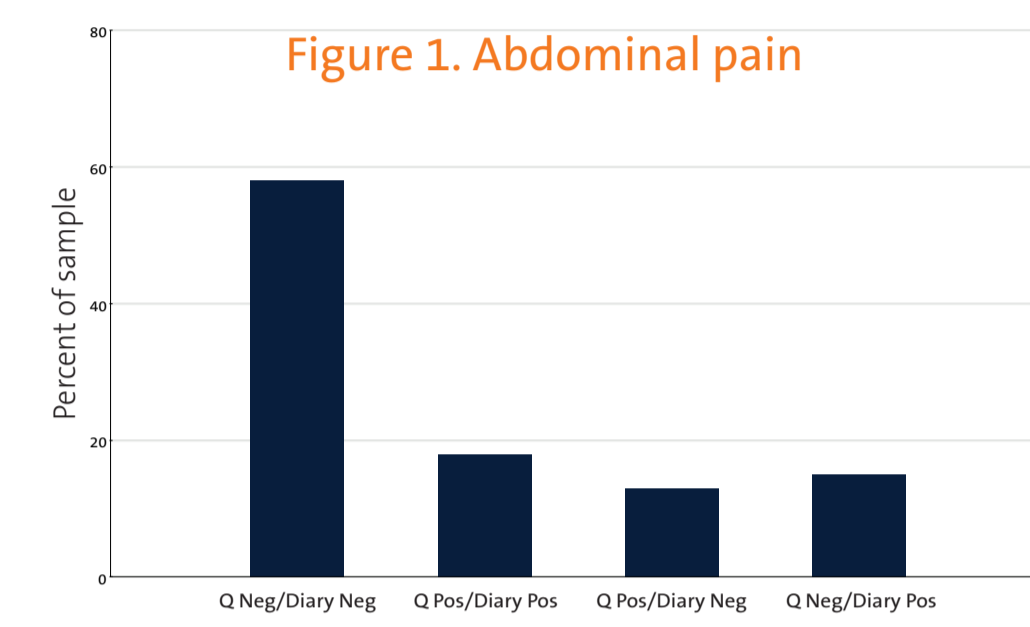
For yes/no criteria observed concordance (%) is reported along with the Kappa coefficient of concordance. For change in stool form with pain, pain and non-pain days were compared using the Mann-Whitney test.

Results

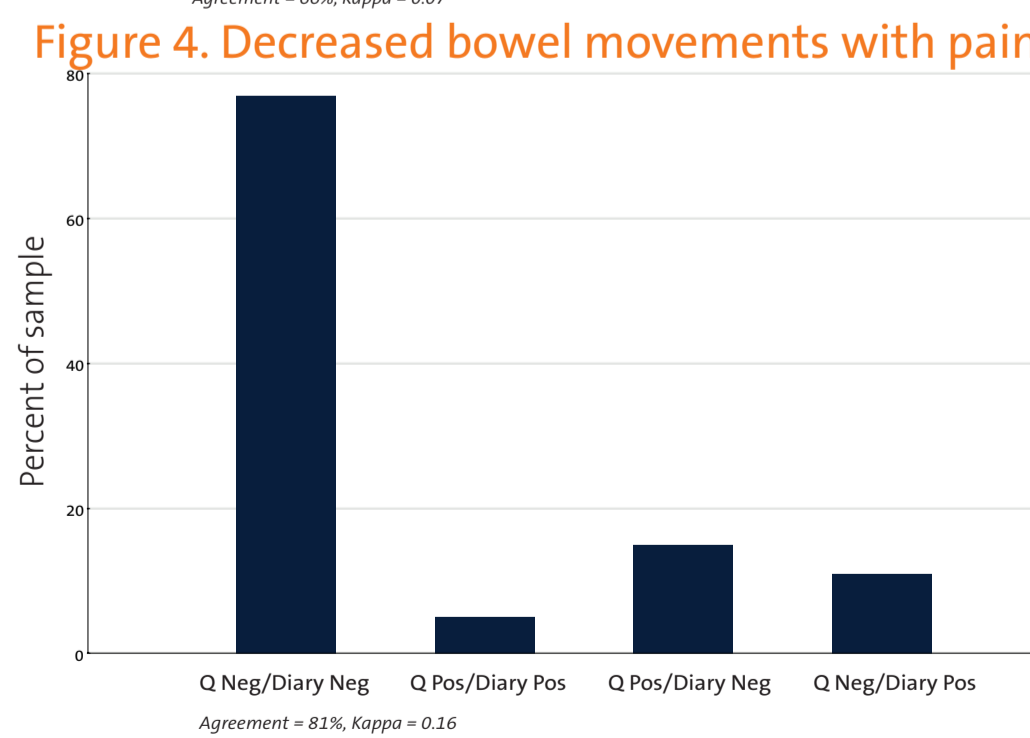
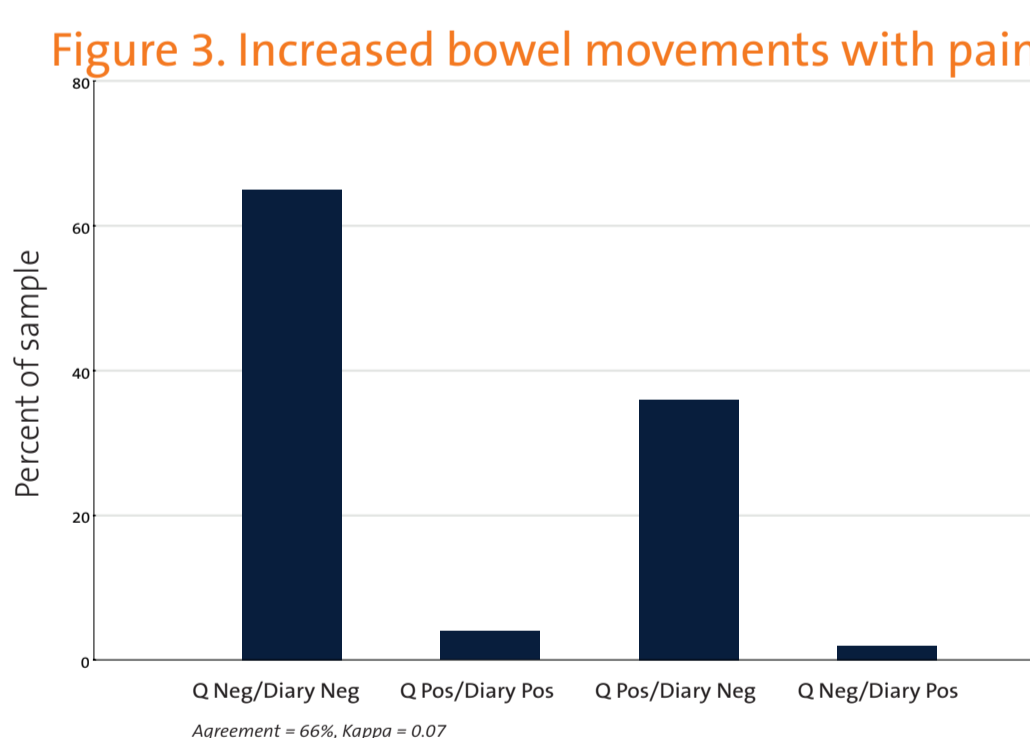
Demographics

- Mean age 54 (SD=11)
- 64% female
- 19% IBS

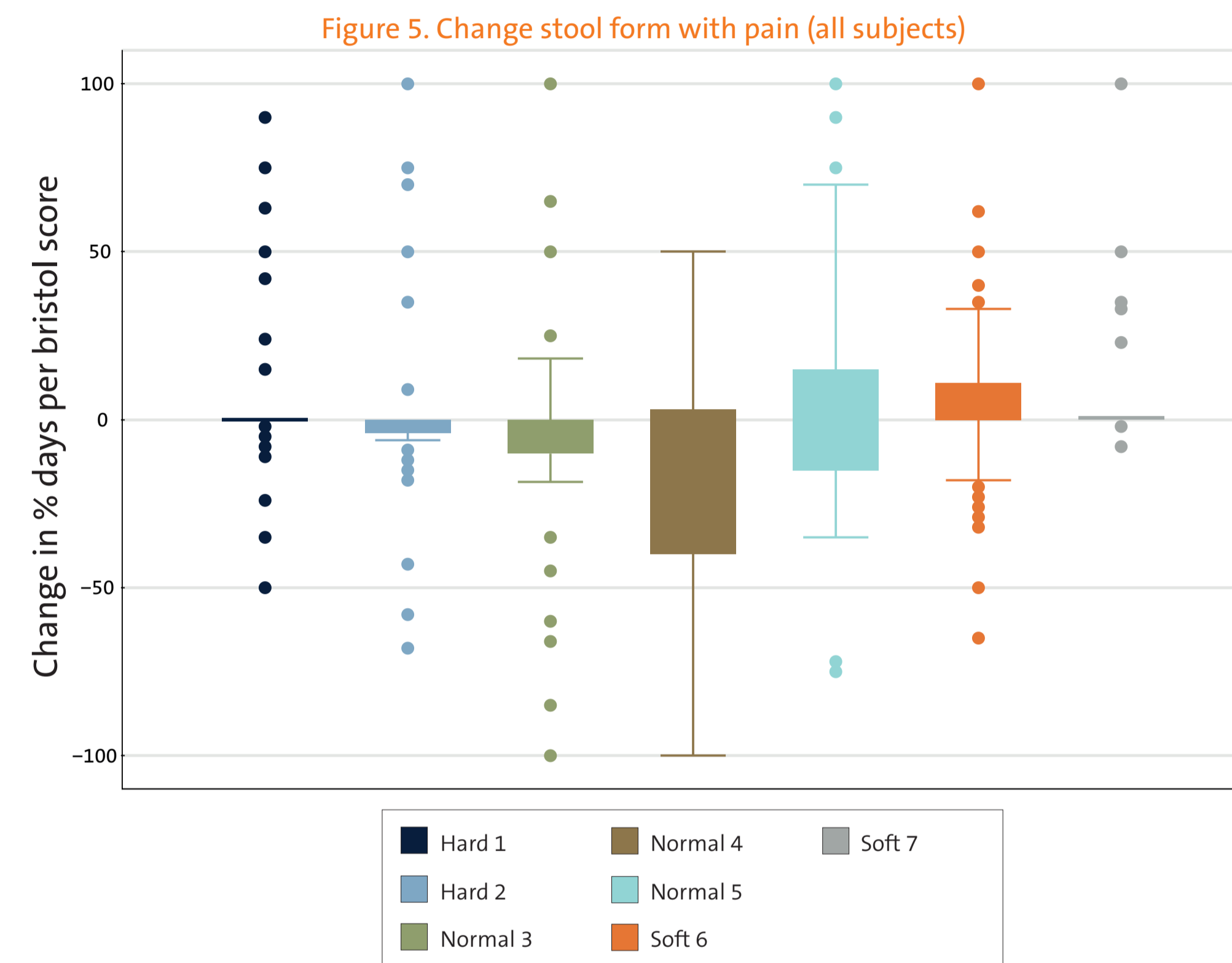
Concordance between questionnaires and diaries



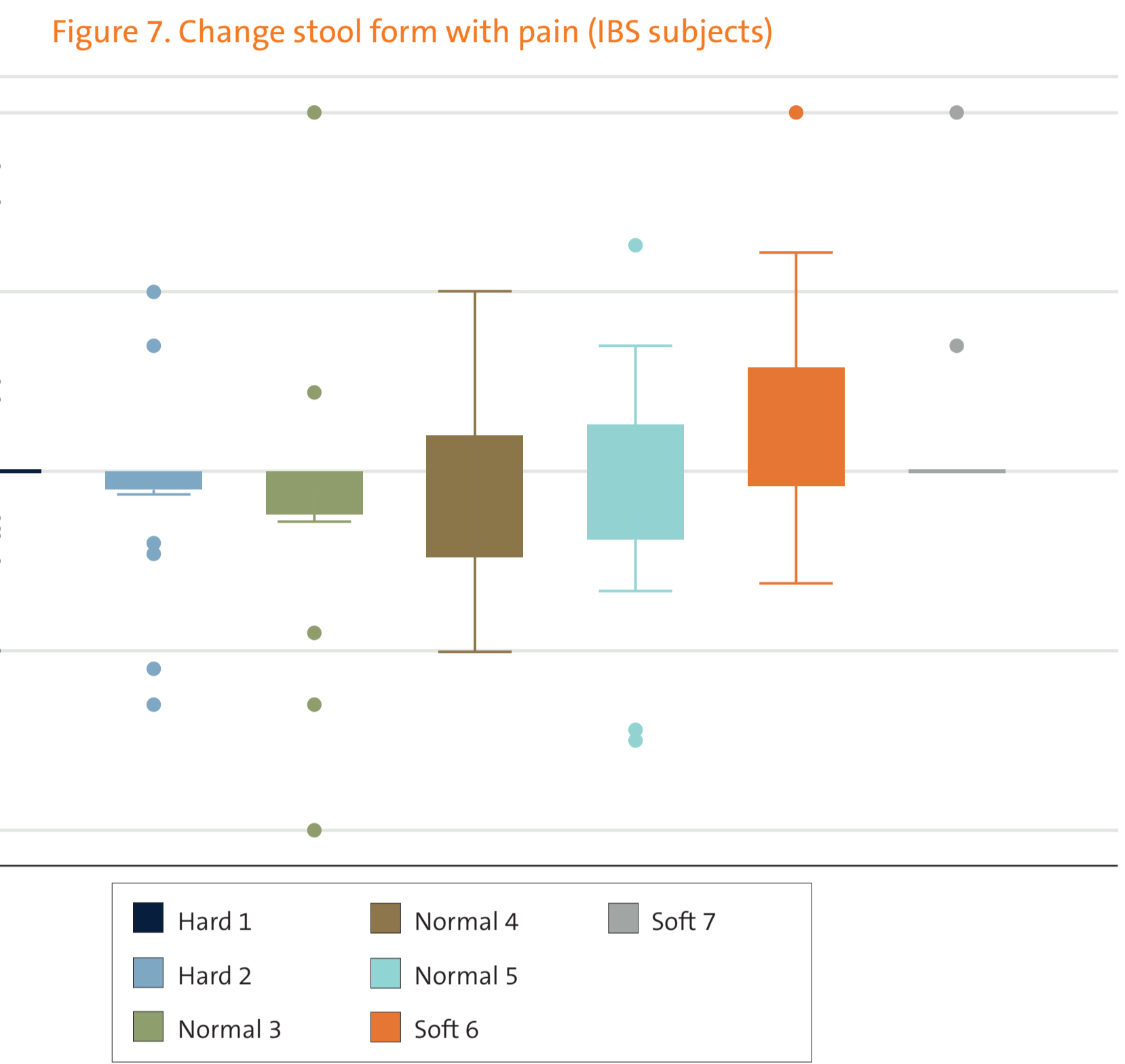
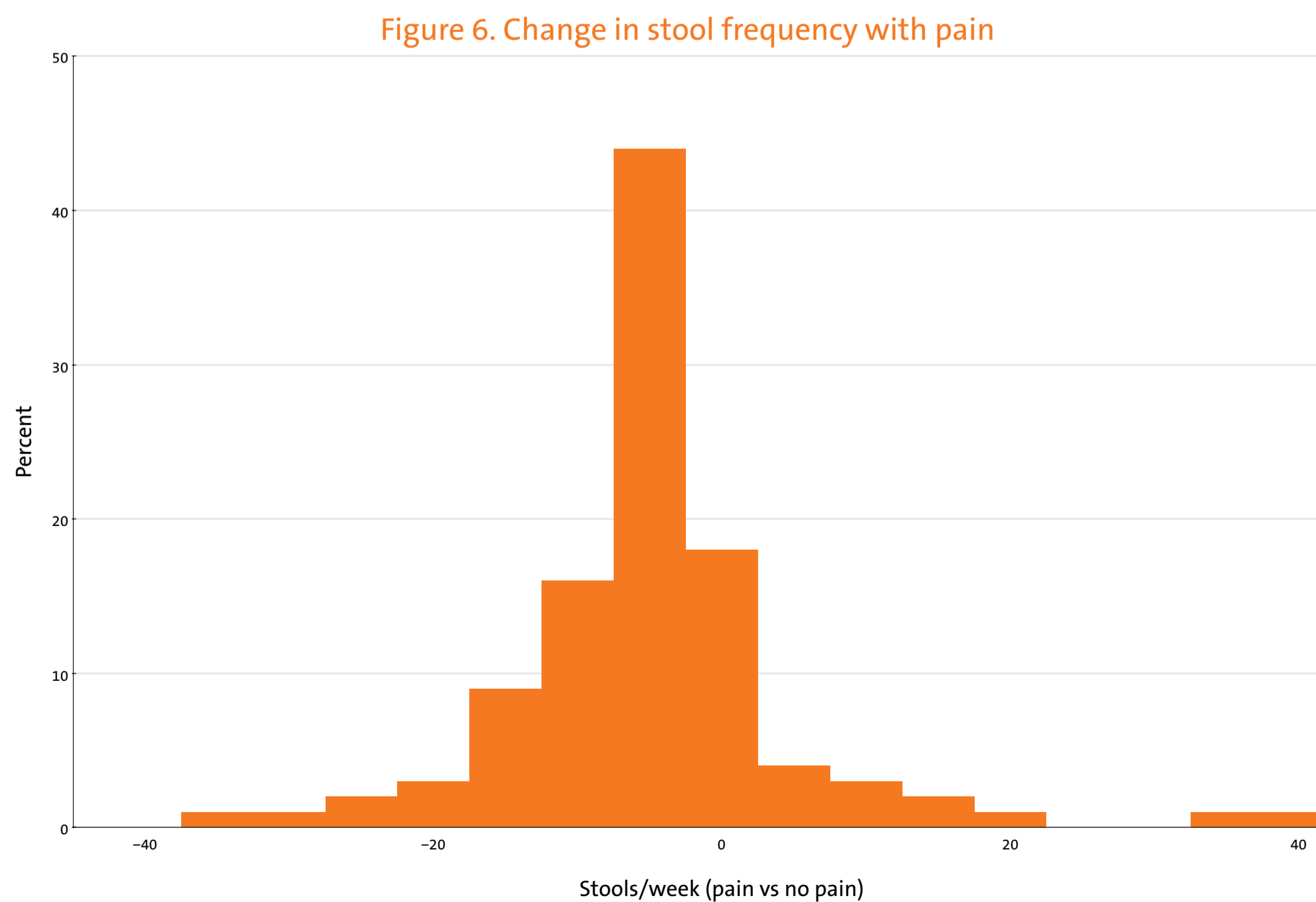
- Abdominal pain: high and above chance concordance
- Pain relieved by defecation: Low and possibly chance-related



- Change in stool frequency: Low and possibly chance-related



- Change in stool form: fewer normal stools on pain days, otherwise no difference



- Change in stool form (IBS): fewer normal stools and more hard stools on pain days

Conclusions

Substantial discrepancy was found when comparing the occurrence of IBS-relevant phenomena based on questionnaire recall and prospective diary records. While some discrepancy might be expected given the short diary record there appears to be considerable unexplained discrepancy.

References/Sources

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CONTACT