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## Validation of a Symptom Provocation Test for Laboratory Studies of Abdominal Pain and Discomfort in Children and Adolescents

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**Objective** Assessed the convergent and discriminant validity of a water load symptom provocation test (WL-SPT) in creating visceral sensations similar to the naturally occurring sensations experienced by children with functional abdominal pain. **Methods** Participants were pediatric patients with functional abdominal pain ( $N = 110$ ) and healthy school children ( $N = 120$ ) between the ages of 8 and 16 years. Pain patients completed questionnaires describing gastrointestinal (GI) and nongastrointestinal (non-GI) symptoms associated with their typical abdominal pain episodes. Weeks later, the WL-SPT was administered to pain patients and well children. Before and immediately following the WL-SPT, children rated their symptoms. **Results** The WL-SPT produced (a) significant increases in children's GI symptoms that were reliably predicted by the children's naturally occurring GI symptoms, and (b) significantly greater increases in GI symptoms in pain patients than in well children. **Conclusions** The WL-SPT produces clinically relevant symptoms for laboratory studies of children with functional abdominal pain.

**Key words:** children; functional abdominal pain; pain perception; recurrent abdominal pain; visceral hypersensitivity.

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