

# Enhancing Quality of Life: The Role of Medical Devices in Gastroparesis Management

Moslem Osmetti\*

Department of Internal Medicine, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2UH, UK

## Introduction

While managing gastroparesis traditionally involves dietary modifications, medications and sometimes surgical interventions, medical devices have emerged as valuable tools in improving symptom management and enhancing the quality of life for patients. In this article, we explore the pivotal role of medical devices in the comprehensive management of gastroparesis. Enhancing the quality of life for individuals with gastroparesis, a condition characterized by delayed gastric emptying, heavily relies on the innovative use of medical devices. These devices, such as gastric electrical stimulators and smart pill technology, offer significant improvements in managing symptoms like nausea, vomiting and severe abdominal pain. Gastric electrical stimulators, for instance, deliver mild electrical pulses to the stomach muscles, promoting better motility and easing discomfort. Smart pills, equipped with sensors, provide detailed data on gastrointestinal transit times, enabling precise and personalized treatment plans [1]. Enteral feeding devices, such as nasogastric tubes, gastrostomy tubes and jejunostomy tubes, play a crucial role in ensuring adequate nutrition and hydration for gastroparesis patients, especially in cases of severe symptoms or when oral intake is insufficient. These devices bypass the stomach and deliver nutrients directly to the small intestine, circumventing the delayed gastric emptying characteristic of gastroparesis.

By providing a route for controlled nutrient delivery, enteral feeding devices help prevent malnutrition and weight loss while offering symptomatic relief. Portable gastric aspiration devices, such as nasogastric or orogastric tubes equipped with suction capabilities, offer a non-invasive means of relieving symptoms associated with gastric retention in gastroparesis patients. These devices allow for the removal of gastric contents, including excess fluid and undigested food particles, providing rapid relief from symptoms such as nausea, bloating and abdominal discomfort. Portable gastric aspiration devices are particularly useful during acute exacerbations of gastroparesis or when patients experience persistent symptoms despite conservative measures. GES devices are implantable medical devices that deliver electrical impulses to the stomach, aiming to regulate gastric motility and alleviate gastroparesis symptoms.

## Description

These devices work by stimulating the smooth muscles of the stomach, facilitating coordinated contractions and promoting gastric emptying. GES therapy is particularly beneficial for patients who are refractory to conventional treatments or experience debilitating symptoms despite medical management. Clinical studies have demonstrated the efficacy of GES devices in reducing

symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and bloating, thereby enhancing patient quality of life [2]. While not a therapeutic device per se, gastric emptying scintigraphy is a diagnostic tool essential for assessing gastric motility and diagnosing gastroparesis. By accurately diagnosing gastroparesis and monitoring treatment response, gastric emptying scintigraphy facilitates personalized patient care and optimizes outcomes. Advances in wearable technology have led to the development of biosensors and monitoring devices capable of tracking physiological parameters relevant to gastroparesis management. These devices can monitor factors such as gastric motility, electrical activity and autonomic function in real time, providing clinicians with valuable insights into disease progression and treatment response.

By enabling remote monitoring and early intervention, wearable biosensors empower patients and healthcare providers to proactively manage gastroparesis and optimize therapeutic outcomes [3]. Medical devices play a multifaceted role in the management of gastroparesis, offering solutions ranging from enteral feeding support to neuromodulation and symptom relief. By addressing the underlying pathophysiology of delayed gastric emptying and providing targeted interventions, these devices contribute to improved symptom control, enhanced nutritional status and ultimately, a better quality of life for patients living with gastroparesis. As technology continues to advance, the role of medical devices in gastroparesis management is poised to expand further, offering hope for more effective treatments and better outcomes in the future [4].

Intragastric balloon devices are minimally invasive devices inserted into the stomach endoscopically to promote satiety and weight loss in obese patients with gastroparesis. While weight loss is not the primary goal of gastroparesis management, obesity can exacerbate symptoms and complicate treatment. Intragastric balloons occupy space within the stomach, reducing its capacity and limiting food intake, which may alleviate symptoms such as bloating and discomfort associated with overeating. Additionally, weight loss achieved through intragastric balloon therapy can improve glycemic control and cardiovascular risk factors in gastroparesis patients with comorbid obesity [5]. Smart pills, or ingestible capsules equipped with sensors and telemetry systems, offer a non-invasive means of assessing gastrointestinal motility and transit times in gastroparesis patients. These capsules contain sensors that detect pH levels, pressure changes and temperature variations as they pass through the gastrointestinal tract. By collecting data on gastric motility and transit, smart pill technology provides clinicians with valuable information to guide treatment decisions and optimize therapy for gastroparesis. Furthermore, smart pills offer a patient-friendly alternative to invasive diagnostic procedures, enhancing patient compliance and convenience.

## Conclusion

In cases of severe gastroparesis complicated by gastric distension and vomiting, gastric decompression devices such as percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy tubes equipped with suction capabilities may be employed to alleviate symptoms and prevent complications such as aspiration pneumonia. These devices facilitate the continuous drainage of gastric contents, relieving pressure within the stomach and reducing the risk of regurgitation and aspiration. Gastric decompression devices are particularly valuable in managing acute exacerbations of gastroparesis or in patients with gastroparesis-related complications requiring prompt intervention. This imaging technique involves ingesting a radiolabeled meal, followed by serial

\*Address for Correspondence: Moslem Osmetti, Department of Internal Medicine, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2UH, UK; E-mail: osmetimoslm@gmail.com

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imaging to track the rate of gastric emptying. Gastric emptying scintigraphy provides valuable information about the severity of gastroparesis and guides treatment decisions, including the use of medical devices such as GES implants.

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None.

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## Conflict of Interest

None.

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