

You're not *imagining* it.

The gut–brain link, explained — what the world's largest study of gut symptoms tells us about how common, real and treatable these conditions are.

The Executive Frame™ · Stability > Clarity > Agency

What is epidemiology?

Epidemiology is the study of disease patterns in populations. When we look at the epidemiology of disorders of gut–brain interaction, a clear pattern appears: these conditions are common, they affect people across all demographics, and they carry real burden.

Why does this matter?

The Rome Foundation Global Study collected symptom data from more than 73,000 people across 33 countries. The findings are striking — DGBIs are the most common gastrointestinal conditions worldwide.

- About 40% of the global population meets criteria for at least one DGBI in any given year.
- IBS is the most prevalent DGBI, affecting roughly 11% of people worldwide.
- Constipation, dyspepsia and bloating are also highly prevalent.
- Prevalence is similar across regions — suggesting universal biological mechanisms.
- DGBIs disproportionately affect women (1.5–2× more common).
- Contributing factors include stress, trauma, poor sleep and dysbiosis.

You are not alone. Four in ten people experience a DGBI. If you feel isolated by your diagnosis, remember — the isolation comes from stigma, not from statistical rarity.

How does this help you?

- Validation — your symptoms are not imaginary. They are documented in millions of people.
- Perspective — DGBIs arise when the gut–brain axis becomes dysregulated. A system-level problem, not a character flaw.
- Integrated care — the prevalence justifies a team approach combining diet, nervous system work, and targeted medical treatment.
- Hope — because DGBIs are so common, decades of research have identified what works. Evidence-based protocols exist.

Microstep — one small action to start today

For the next 24 hours, notice your gut–brain connection. **Time** — when do symptoms peak? **Food** — what did you eat in the two hours before? **Mood** — what was happening emotionally? **Context** — work pressure, relationship tension, short sleep? Awareness precedes change: you are not collecting data to blame yourself, you are building a map of your system so you can learn what helps.

NEED SUPPORT?

Questions? consultant@sarahanticich.co.nz · executiveframe.co.nz — and bring this sheet to your next appointment if you would like to talk it through.

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