METHODS (cont’d)
- A full working day was considered to be the equivalent of 8 hours, and a partial day was considered to be the equivalent of 4 hours.
- For the purposes of this analysis, rates of absenteeism were reported as the average for the population and not as the average of the individuals’ absenteeism rates, as is typical in the scoring of the WPAI/IBS.

RESULTS
Patient characteristics
A total of 135 patients were enrolled.
- The patients had all types of IBS: 39% had alternating constipation/diarrhea, 29% had IBS with diarrhea and 27% had IBS with constipation. Only 5% of patients reported normal bowel pattern (although they met diagnostic criteria for IBS).
- Demographics and clinical characteristics of the enrolled subjects are shown in Table 1. Most patients were female (91.1%) and the mean age was 45.4 years.
- Of the 135 patients, 133 were employed. Complete data (days and hours worked and missed) from work were available for 125 patients and were included in the analysis.

RESULTS (cont’d)
- None of the patients who missed <2 hours reported any ‘days missed’.
- When data from patients reporting days and partial days missed were combined, the number of patients reporting 3–5 hours of absenteeism was the same as with the WPAI/IBS ‘hours missed’ measure of absenteeism.
- However, the number of patients reporting the least amount of absenteeism (≤2 hours) was again undercounted.
- When the amount of reported absenteeism was 8 hours or more in the previous 7 days (which occurred infrequently), there appeared to be a better correlation between the ‘days missed’ and ‘hours missed’ measures of absenteeism.

CONCLUSIONS
- IBS-related work absenteeism is an important indicator of a patient’s functional well-being and is likely to have significant economic consequences for the patient and his/her employer.
- This analysis showed that the standard measure of absenteeism – days missed from work due to IBS – greatly underestimated the rate of absenteeism in the previous 7 days.
- More than three-quarters of IBS patients missed up to 5 hours from work in the previous 7 days, but most of these patients were not included in the analysis when ‘days missed’ was the measure of absenteeism.
- Overall, 60.7% of IBS absenteeism was not included when ‘hours missed’ was used.
- By eliciting work hours missed, the WPAI/IBS takes into account those patients who do not necessarily take a full day off, but who may miss partial days, e.g., by going in late or leaving work early.
- Given the range of hours worked and the pattern of most absences, the WPAI/IBS measure of absenteeism was the most accurate measure for assessing IBS-related absenteeism in this population.