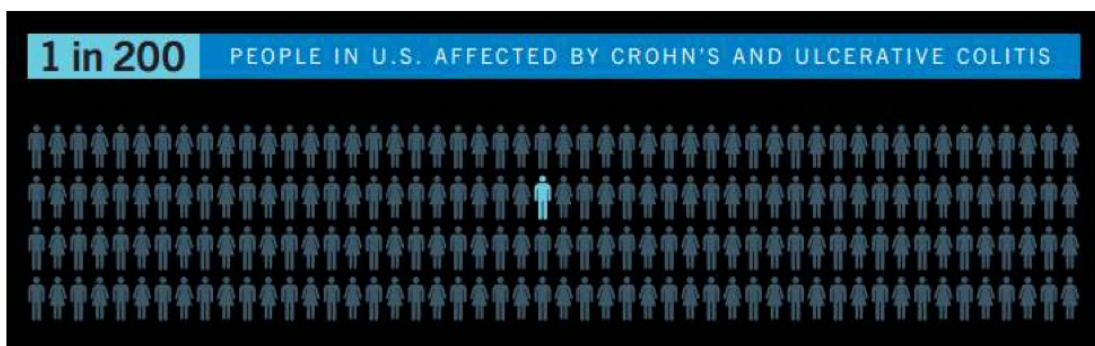


CSE 440
1/10/15

Problem and Motivation

A problem that individuals with GI (Gastro-intestinal) Disorders face is the inability to know which food items cause the most health problems for them. In fact, each person has a unique set of reactions to various food making it impossible to generalize what food is good and what is bad. Right now, we know that certain diets can aggravate symptoms but more research is needed to understand exactly how diet may impact these diseases. By not considering the influence of diet on these diseases, a patient's health condition can worsen and even lead to more drastic problems like colon cancer. I believe that this is an important problem to address because while most GI disorders are currently incurable, addressing this problem will at least make them more manageable. Solving this problem has the potential to help over a million people and allow them to lead more normal lifestyles.



Analysis of Problem

The problem as stated above is the need to understand what food items are worsening the symptoms of GI disorder patients. However, a more positive approach of this problem is looking at what food items can stabilize or even decrease these symptoms. Either way we are examining the relationship between diet and GI disorder symptoms. Given that patient reactions to identical diets are not homogenous, the best way to approach this problem is through the realm of personal informatics. Personal informatics enables us to create an artefact that serves a unified purpose but with personally relevant results.

Within this scenario, we are trying to find the optimal diet for GI Disorder patients with the understanding that it will be different for each patient. A possible personal informatics approach that people could take to resolve this problem is by continuously tracking the food that they are eating and then noting their following symptom or comfort level. With a multitude of data, they could begin to piece together what food items work for them and what don't. And more importantly, they can make decisions that will help them lead healthier lifestyles.