


Abstract

Preliminary Findings Regarding Nutrition Information Needs among Family Physicians in Turkey [†]

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Abstract: Background and objectives: Considering the information pollution in the field of nutrition and health in society, more than half of the community asks family physicians (FPs) as the closest counseling unit about healthy nutrition and related issues. However, FPs' nutritional knowledge levels are limited, and nutrition-related courses are not an integral part of their education. There is a need to organize postgraduate nutrition-based training programs for FPs. Methods: In order to determine the training needs of FPs, a needs assessment questionnaire was developed by the researchers in order to select topics in which they need to be trained before preparing a training program. There were 26.252 FPs in Turkey at the time of the study. AHEF is the federation of all seventy-six FP associations in Turkey. FPs who are members of any of these associations constituted the study population. The questionnaire was sent to all registered FPs electronically. Results: The questionnaire was replied to by 1308 FPs, of whom 46% were female and the average working period was 15 ± 3 years (1–38). Only 26.4% of the FPs declared that they felt competent while answering patients' questions on nutrition, 12.8% thought their knowledge was insufficient, 62.6% thought their knowledge was partly sufficient, and 23.2% recommend some kind of supplement to their patients. The topics that are indicated by the FPs were quantified and taken into consideration while the training program was prepared. The training program, which provided the first ever nutrition and nutrition communication online information platform for physicians in Turkey, was developed in collaboration with an NGO, the university, and AHEF. It consisted of eight online training topics starting in March 2022 and was conducted once every two weeks. Discussion: Postgraduate nutrition training programs for physicians and other health professionals who wish to improve their current knowledge of the role of nutrition and communication in the prevention and management of chronic diseases are limited worldwide. It is necessary to increase the level of nutrition knowledge of FPs with postgraduate training programs. Nutrition communication is the next step toward improvement.

Keywords: nutrition; family physician; nutrition communication



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