

**The effect of nutritional counselor's knowledge of
diabetic management on patient's recovery rate: case
of Nakuru general hospital**

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Introduction

- Nutritional counselling is one of the medical therapies which have proved effective in both treatment and healing of patients with diet related conditions such as diabetes.
- A big percentage of patients die of trauma and other conditions, which require proper nutritional counselling, in the hands of professionals who use unconventional way of rendering such services to their patients.

Objective

- The objective of this article is to establish the effect of counselor's knowledge of diabetic management on patient's recovery rate

Health Benefits of Dietary Guidance on Diabetic Patients

- It is well known that depression is a common, treatable issue for many people with diabetes but most busy clinics cannot provide the level of intensive care these patients need.
- As a result, the treatment of diabetes becomes an enigma among the patients and the concerned stakeholders (Scarlet, 1998).
- Moreover, this proves to be a major hurdle for diabetics in maintaining the strict medication regimen or exercise schedule.
- There appears to be a kind of laxity among those people who are supposed to do the follow up considering that patients with diabetes often have self-management needs that require only between-visit support (Scarlet, 1998).

Diabetic management and treatment of the disease

- As expressed in this paper, dietary counselling is related to the management of diabetes and has been proved to improve patients' nutritional status, clinical status, effectiveness of treatment, quality of life, functioning and survival (Harris & Haughton, 2000).
- Dietary adjustments are an integral part of the management of diabetes.
- Persons having diabetes often need personal guidance so as to enrich their knowledge and thus aid suitable selection of foods and intake of balanced diet
- The goal of dietary counselling for diabetes management is helpful in improving the diets in affluent countries with high rates of literacy, easily available information about food compositions and a wide range of food choices (Franz, 2004).
- The impact of such guidance requires some evaluation in a variety of settings because compliance to various dietary suggestions may differ according to type of recipients and thus the effects (American Dietetic Association and Dietitians of Canada, 2000).
- This being the goal of this study, it could help in determining the areas needing focus during dietary counselling in particular kind of population.

Theoretical Framework

- This study would not have been complete without applying related theories. Considering that many theories have been developed to explain human uptake of health services, this study adopted Irwin Rosenstock's health belief model.
- This is a combination of a health behavior model and a psychological model.
- The Health Belief Model has been applied to a broad range of health behaviors and subject populations (Strecher & Rosenstock, 1997).
- In this study much attention was on the health-promoting part of the model which includes; treatment therapies like diet, Sick role behaviors, which refer to compliance with recommended dietary treatment for diabetics, usually following professional diagnosis of illness (Strecher & Rosenstock, 1997).
- It was then tied to the main objective of finding out whether the frequency of nutritional counseling has effect on the adherence to the dietary therapies among diabetic patients under study.

Methodology

- In this study, descriptive survey with ex-post facto design was used.
- The study location was the Nakuru Provincial General Hospital in Nakuru County.
- The target population for this study consisted of all known diabetic patients and nutritionists in rift valley general hospital.
- The data was collected using structured questionnaires and included their views concerning the issue at hand

Results and Discussions

- The research hypothesis stated, “There is no statistically significant influence of nutritional counsellors knowledge on diabetic management and rate of recovery among patients in Nakuru Provincial Hospital (N.P.H)”.
- Most dieticians (nutritional counselors) seemed to have adequate level of training.
- Additionally, the dietician’s area of specialization seemed to be more on nutrition since 87.5% of the respondents indicated their area of specialization as nutrition.
- Only 12.5% indicated palliative care as their area of specialization.

Results and Discussions

- The study also indicated that dieticians are provided by the institution a variety of refresher courses to improve their knowledge and effectiveness in provision of their crucial services.
- As indicated in Table 19, 87.5% of the dieticians benefited with refresher courses relevant to their nutritional counselling work with only 12.5% of the nutritionists stating that they have never been provided with a refresher course.
- The most important refresher training reported by the dieticians was nutrition, palliative care, integrated management of malnutrition, HIV/Aids, Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) and Diabetic management.
- It can further be noted that the institution highly recognize their nutritional knowledge as majority of them indicated that diabetics in the institution are counseled about good diet by nutritionists/dieticians and not nurses, doctors or other medical workers.

Table 19

	Description	Frequency	Percent
Level of training	Diploma	6	66.7
	Graduate	2	33.3
	Total	8	100.0
Area of specialization	Nutrition	7	87.5
	Palliative care	1	12.5
	Total	8	100.0
Attendance of refresher training	Yes	7	87.5
	No	1	12.5
	Total	8	100.0

SUMMARY

- Most dieticians (nutritional counselors) had adequate level of training in their area of specialization and had been provided with a variety of refresher courses to improve their knowledge and effectiveness in provision of services.
- This went directly into ensuring the recovery rate of patients is high.
- Studies prove that the more the knowledge, the better the handling of patients and therefore recovery rate among patients.

Conclusions

- Most dietitians (nutritional counselors) have adequate level of training relevant to their area of specialization.
- They are also occasionally provided with a variety of refresher courses (nutrition, palliative care, integrated management of malnutrition, HIV/Aids, Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) and Diabetic management) to improve their knowledge and effectiveness in provision of their crucial services.
- This has been proved to positively reflect on patient's recovery rate.

Thank you