

Abstract

Background: In Egypt, digestive disorders including liver cirrhosis are now the second main leading cause of total disease burden (10%). The prevalence of malnutrition varies; from 20% in compensated liver disease to more than 80% in decompensated disease. Factors as frequent hospitalizations, overzealous diet therapy, and “hospital food”. Studies indicate that physicians have little knowledge of nutrition. Nutrition education among residents in training is at a critical juncture. There is a general lack of a unified curriculum, nutrition physician mentors, and a failure to properly train physicians about nutrition.

Aim of the work: Enhance the quality of management offered to chronic liver disease (CLD) patients at Kasr El Aini Educational Hospitals.

Subjects and Methods: This study was conducted in the internal medicine hospital of Kasr el Aini educational hospitals on 4 groups of participants: 45 resident physicians, 21 house officers, 10 nutrition supervisors and a total of 212 of the inpatients (group A, 112 patients and group B , 100 patients).

Results: More than 95% of the patients sought medical follow up for their medical conditions. 40% of the residents admitted their poor nutritional knowledge and referred to it as the main cause of deficient instructions to the patients. The mean nutritional knowledge score of the residents was $36.8\% \pm 17.4\%$ (before the intervention). The source of knowledge for those residents was the senior resident (and occasionally senior staff) in more than 70% of them as opposed to only 25% of the house officers. The difference was statistically significant. Low protein diet was the most common dietary regimen prescribed by all the physicians study with no statistically significant differences between them. There were also no statistically significant differences between the nutritional knowledge scores of the residents who completed the program and those who were excluded. Direct evaluation of the intervention took place by the residents' post test. The mean nutrition knowledge score of the residents' post-test was $94\% \pm 6.1\%$ which was significantly higher than the pre-test ($P < 0.001$). The mean score percent change was $276.8\% \pm 311.6\%$. Indirect evaluation of the intervention was through interviewing an independent sample of patients (group B). The results showed a mean nutrition knowledge score of $62.7\% \pm 11.8\%$. The increase from group A results was statistically significant.

Conclusion: The nutrition knowledge of the resident physicians was markedly defective. The percentage of residents following the recent guidelines in dietary recommendations for CLD patients were few. Promising results could be attained from interventions attempting to upgrade the residents' knowledge.

Key words:

Assessment – Nutrition education – Training – Chronic liver diseases (CLD).