

Dietetic Practices in Adult Hemodialysis Units Compared to K/DOQI Guidelines, Lebanon

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Background: In Lebanon, hemodialysis (HD) units are exclusively hospital based, and most hospitals have only one dietitian performing all nutrition related activities in the hospital. This study investigated current dietetic practices and their conformity with Kidney Disease Quality Outcomes Initiative (KDOQI) nutrition guidelines in HD units, Lebanon.

Methods: National cross-sectional survey, using an anonymous 36 item, self-administered questionnaire, collected from all dietary departments of hospital based HD units in Lebanon (n=55). The questionnaire included: 1) demographics and professional characteristics; 2) knowledge of KDOQI nutrition guidelines; 3) level of implementation of KDOQI guidelines in assessing and estimating nutritional needs. Descriptive statistics was used.

Results: The response rate was 71%, 97% were female, 82% were within the age of 21-34, 67% were full timers in the hospitals and 85% worked ≤ 10 hours per week in HD units. Minimum educational level was Bachelor of Science yet none had a specialty. Almost 50% had < five years experience in general clinical or renal practice setting. Half of the dietitians worked in hospitals where their clinical workload ranged from 100 to 200 patients, including HD patients. Overall, dietitian knowledge of KDOQI nutrition guidelines was $35.45\% \pm 16.9\%$. Most dietitians (97%) implemented at least 1 guideline, and only 5% applied all guidelines.

Conclusions: The study identified a low conformity with KDOQI guidelines among dietitians managing HD patients in Lebanon. HD units in Lebanon can possibly improve their patients' outcomes by providing dietitians with sufficient time, knowledge, empowerment and training based on the KDOQI nutrition guidelines.