The Eating at Treatment (EAT) Questionnaire: A Tool to Assess Habits Related to Patients Eating at Dialysis

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Conclusions

• Based on results obtained from this small pilot questionnaire, patients reported eating less on treatment days vs non-treatment days.
• In addition, patients who did eat during treatment reported that what they ate was low in protein.
• This questionnaire is an effective tool that is easy to administer and score (total time ~12 min) for providing insight into the eating habits of patients receiving dialysis treatment.
• An opportunity exists for educating patients through nutritional counseling about increasing their protein and kcal intake on treatment days.
• Distribution of this questionnaire to a large number of dialysis patients may prove useful for reevaluating policies regarding eating at dialysis centers.

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Introduction

• Within the US, the policies at dialysis facilities differ as to whether patients are permitted to eat while being treated on dialysis.
• The Eating at Treatment (EAT) questionnaire was developed as a tool to assess possible differences between eating and shrinking habits of patients on days they received dialysis treatment vs. non-treatment days and to monitor kcal and protein intake while at dialysis.

Objective

• The EAT pilot program was designed to determine whether educating patients permitted to eat while being treated on dialysis.

Methods

• Seven Registered Dietitians (RDs) administered the EAT questionnaire to 61 patients.
• The EAT questionnaire consisted of the following questions:

1. Thinking back on the last week:
   - How many times did you usually eat on dialysis days (consider all meals and snacks)?
   - How did the amount of food you ate on dialysis differ from what you ate on non-dialysis days? (More, Less, No Difference)
2. Do you usually eat while at the dialysis center either before, during, or after dialysis? Yes / No
   - If yes, then please indicate whether it is usually:
     - Before dialysis (at the center)
     - During dialysis (during treatment)
     - After dialysis (at the center)
3. Do you know of kidney-friendly foods that you could bring to eat at dialysis?
4. If you do not eat before, during, or after dialysis, then what are the reasons you do not eat?
   - Not permitted
   - Not hungry
   - Have had a bad experience
   - Do not plan ahead
   - Don’t know what to eat
   - Other
5. If you do eat before, during or after dialysis, then what do you normally eat at treatment?

Results

• Patients ate fewer meals and snacks on dialysis days (Figure 1).
• The majority of eating at the dialysis facility occurred while the patient was on dialysis (Figure 2).
• If the patients who ate at the dialysis facility, 86% reported that they ate during treatment as opposed to before or after treatment.
• Of the patients who did not eat at the dialysis facility, the most common reported reasons were:
  – 63% were not hungry (Figure 3)
  – 20% reported an adverse event (eg., stomach pain, risk of diarrhea, hypotension)

Figure 1: Differences in Food Intake on Dialysis vs. Non-Dialysis Days

• Reported dietary intake from 37 patients who ate during dialysis was scored by RDs for protein and kcal content.
  – Adequate intake was set at > 200 kcal for calorie intake and > 10g of protein for protein intake
  – 19 (51%) patients reported adequate kcal intake (Figure 4)
  – 12 (32%) patients reported adequate protein intake (Figure 5)

Figure 2: If You Do Eat at the Dialysis Facility, When Do You Eat?

Figure 3: If You Do Not Eat at the Dialysis Facility, Then Why?

Figure 4: Caloric Intake: If You Do Eat Before, During, or After Dialysis, What Do You Normally Eat at Treatment?

Figure 5: Protein Intake: If You Do Eat Before, During, or After Dialysis, What Do You Normally Eat at Treatment?