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Nutrition education class is effective in improving nutrition knowledge in patients with stage 3-5 chronic kidney diseases

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Introduction

Nutrition therapy is important in the management of chronic kidney disease (CKD) - a disease with permanent and progressive loss of kidney function. However, patients often find it challenging to modify their dietary habit due to lack of knowledge in renal diet. A group education class was started in November 2015 to improve patients' nutrition knowledge in CKD and empower them to manage their own diet. The talk covers basic renal diet principles, electrolyte control, fluid balance, home cooking and eating out tips followed by cooking demonstration and taste tasting.

Objectives

To assess patients' nutritional knowledge on CKD before and after the class

Methodology

Patients with stage 3 to 5 CKD were recruited into this class. The patients were asked to fill in a questionnaire with 10 questions regarding protein, sodium, potassium and phosphorus content of common food before and after the class. There was no exclusion criterion for this study. The scores of both pre- and post-questionnaires were calculated and their mean difference was quantified with Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. P value < 0.05 was considered as statistically significant.

Result

A total of 52 patients attended the class from November 2015 to November 2016, of which 38 of them completed both pre- and post-questionnaires. The rest of the patients either did not fill in any questionnaires, filled in only pre- or post-questionnaire, or the questionnaires were completed by relatives. The patients' (76% male) mean age was 63 years old (35-83 years). 68% of patients' education level is secondary or above. The average score was significantly increased from 5.68 \pm 1.86 to 8.05 \pm 1.18 ($p < 0.001$) after the class.

Conclusion

The education class is an effective method to improve the nutrition knowledge of patients with CKD. The next step would be to evaluate the effectiveness of nutrition therapy on the progression of CKD.