

Review of: "How Competent are Health Professionals in Delivering Nutrition Education? A Cross-Sectional Study in Ebonyi State, Nigeria"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

REVIEW REPORT

How Competent are Health Professionals in Delivering Nutrition Education? A Cross-Sectional Study in Ebonyi State, Nigeria

General comments

1. The article deals with the competency of health professionals in delivering nutrition education in Ebonyi State, Nigeria.
2. The manuscript/article seeks to discuss an important subject matter, nutrition education, which is the bedrock of good health leading to disease prevention, and wants to know the extent to which health professionals are competent enough in providing nutrition education.
3. The title page, abstract, introduction, methodology, results and discussions, and conclusion are all presented in an orderly manner.
4. Though the article/manuscript discusses a very important topic central to good health, it is quite muddled. Honestly, I have a little challenge understanding the topic because, to the best of my knowledge, not all health professionals are trained to deliver nutrition education. Invariably, patients see a doctor for a particular health challenge. Whenever there is a need for a doctor to refer a particular patient to a nutritionist/dietician, it is often done. However, the authors are presuming that every health professional should have adequate nutrition knowledge to address the nutritional needs of patients on a daily basis, which is not entirely correct.

Specific Comments/Suggested Revisions

Abstract

1. I think the statement '*health professionals are central to informing good dietary habits*' is overgeneralized. It appeared the authors were expecting a role from professionals that they were not trained to perform. To the best of my knowledge, health professionals specifically trained to deliver nutrition education are **Registered Dietitians, Nutritionists or Certified Nutrition Specialists, Certified Dietetic Technicians and Certified Dietary Managers**, and the like. So, when a particular patient attends a health facility and has a nutrition-related problem, the doctor will refer that patient to a dietitian or nutritionist.

Introduction

1. Certain statements in the introduction are quite problematic and need to be put in the proper perspective.
 - In paragraph 2, line 3, the statement ***They are held in high regard as the most credible source of nutritional messages*** - Is it the perception of the authors, or what is generally known?
 - Paragraph 3, line 3: ***Nutrition education should be a prerequisite for the acceptance and consumption of food*** - Are the authors suggesting this, or is it a statement of truth? If it is not a categorical statement, then they should cite the source. Otherwise, they can render it as, ***To the best of our knowledge, nutrition education should be a prerequisite for the acceptance and consumption of food***.
 - Paragraph 3, lines 3 & 4: ***Healthy nutrition is neglected in daily medical practice*** - The authors' presumption that nutrition education is a core function of medical practitioners is not entirely true and should be revised.
 - Paragraph 3, lines 5 & 6: ***....., it is time to ensure all health professionals will be able to provide evidence-based nutrition education*** - I don't think it is realistic or possible to expect all health professionals to perform a role they are not trained to perform. This perception seems to run through the entire introduction.
1. What exactly was the motivation for this study? In other words, what problem did the study seek to address?

Materials and Methods

1. How exactly was the data collected from the study respondents? How was the questionnaire administered? Was the response rate of the questionnaire 100%? Did all 421 participants take part in the study? How did they treat responses with logical discrepancies or questionnaires with incomplete answers?
2. Was consent obtained from the respondents? Was it written or verbal?
3. Though the authors applied rigor to select their study respondents, the number of dietitians (n = 4), which matters the most in the subject matter, was highly disproportionate to that of nurses (n = 249). Hence, the results of the statistical analysis may not reflect the actual situation on the ground.

Results

1. Should it be ***length of practice*** or ***years of practice*** (Table 1, please check).
2. How could a physiotherapist show 17 times more competency in nutrition education than a dietitian? This may be a clear case where a statistical result may convey a different meaning other than the actual situation on the ground. It is like comparing apples and oranges!
3. The plausible reasons why less than one tenth of respondents had good knowledge of nutrition may be attributed to the fact that most of the professionals included in the study – medical doctors, physiotherapists, nurses, and dentists – are not professionals trained to deliver nutrition education.

Discussion

1. Last paragraph on page 12, line 2: ***This was similar to findings in studies done in Saudi Arabia***;..... This

statement doesn't sound grammatically well. Please check the statement and revise.

2. Could the authors discuss briefly (in the discussion section) what additional knowledge this study is contributing?

Conclusion

1. Okay

References

1. Okay