

## Nutritional Awareness in Haemodialysis Patients: Are We Doing Enough?

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### Abstract:

**Background:** Nutritional management is a cornerstone in the care of patients undergoing haemodialysis. Adequate dietary knowledge and adherence to restrictions are essential to prevent complications such as hyperkalaemia, hyperphosphatemia, fluid overload, and malnutrition. Despite this, patients often have limited awareness and inadequate counselling.

**Objectives:** To assess dietary knowledge, counselling practices, and awareness of food restrictions among patients undergoing maintenance haemodialysis.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional, questionnaire-based study was conducted among 24 patients attending a haemodialysis unit. A structured questionnaire assessed whether patients had received diet-related counselling, knowledge of dietary restrictions (sodium, potassium, phosphorus, protein, and fluid intake), awareness of recommended food items, receipt of written dietary information, and regularity of body weight monitoring. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize findings.

**Results:** Of the 24 patients (mean age  $41.5 \pm 6.2$  years; 58% male), 15 (62.5%) reported receiving diet-related counselling. Fourteen (58.3%) were aware of dietary restrictions, with sodium restriction being the most commonly identified (85.7%), followed by fluid control (71.4%), potassium restriction (64.3%), high-protein intake (57.1%), and phosphorus restriction (50.0%). Only 13 (54.2%) could specify food items to strictly avoid, while 11 (45.8%) knew recommended food items such as pulses and egg whites. Written dietary information was available to just 6 patients (25.0%). Regular interdialytic weight monitoring was practiced by 16 patients (66.7%).

**Conclusion:** Dietary awareness among haemodialysis patients was suboptimal, with significant gaps in knowledge regarding potassium and phosphorus restrictions and limited access to written information. Reinforced nutritional counselling, supported by visual aids and individualized advice during dialysis visits, is essential to improve dietary compliance and clinical outcomes.

### Keywords:

Haemodialysis, Dietary Counselling, Nutrition Awareness, Patient Education, Dietary Practices.