

Medical Student and Resident Physician Perceptions on Including RDNs in Outpatient Practice

Elena Carr, MS, Janice A Plante, MS, Chelsea Bruce, John Plante, Sequoia Hill, Krista Bird, Leslie T Van Horn, MS, RDN, LDN

Objective: To assess medical student and resident physician perceptions regarding the role of registered dietitians in outpatient practice

Design: A multiple choice survey with 21 questions was distributed to medical students and primary care resident physicians in South Carolina.

Methods and Instruments: Qualtrics software was used to create the survey and collect data. Chi-squared and descriptive statistics were used to analyze data.

Results: The majority of the 166 participants (97.6%) believed nutrition to be critical to patients' well-being. Most participants (67.5%) thought including an RDN in outpatient practice added benefit. Frequency of encountering nutrition-related problems in clinical practice was directly associated with value of having an onsite RDN ($p=0.003$). Comfort in providing patient education was not associated with perceived benefit of an onsite RDN ($p=0.087$). Resident physicians were less comfortable with providing nutrition education to patients than medical students (56.1% vs. 74.4%, respectively; $p=0.027$).

Conclusions: With the high prevalence of nutrition-related diseases, interdisciplinary collaboration between physicians and RDNs is becoming increasingly important. Regardless of participants' own confidence levels in addressing nutritional concerns, most physicians in training believe that having an onsite RDN adds value. Additionally, participants who frequently encountered nutrition-related problems were more receptive to involving RDNs in patient care. Inclusion of RDNs in settings with higher frequencies of nutrition-related problems would likely have the most impact on improving patient outcomes.

Conflict of Interest/Funding Disclosure Statement: None

Figure 1: Participant Responses to Survey Questions

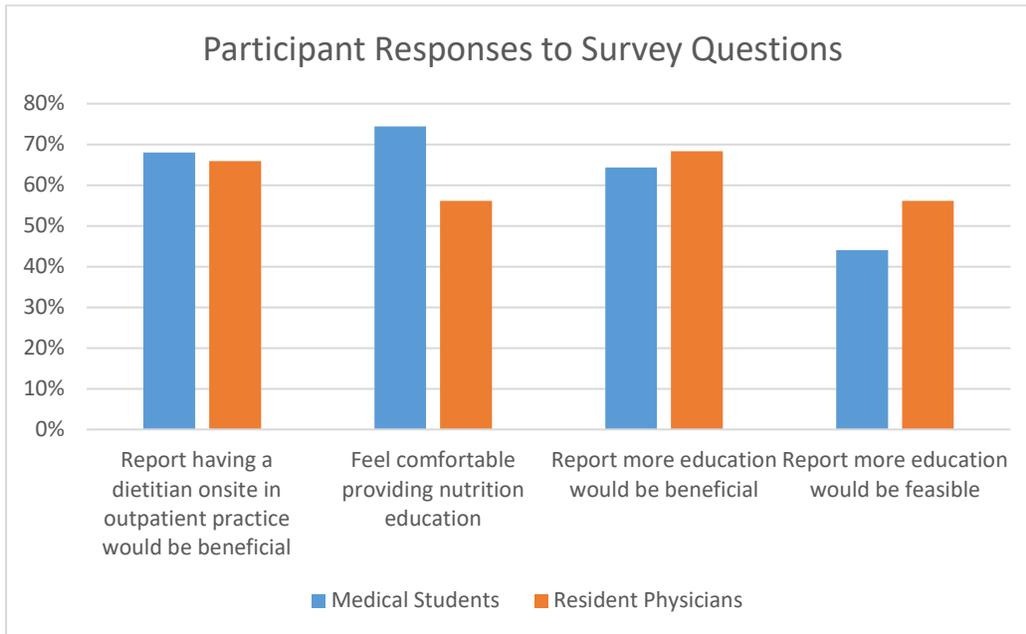


Figure 1 includes the participants who responded to the survey questions with an “extremely” or “very” answer choice to the specified survey questions.

Figure 2: Participant Demographics

Demographics n=166		
	Number	Percent
Male	93	56%
Female	73	44%
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	137	82.5%
African American	8	4.5%
Asian	16	9.6%
Latino/Hispanic	2	1.2%
Other	3	1.8%
Age		
19-24	41	24.7%
25-29	60	36.1%
30+	11	6.6%
Medical Students	125	75.3%
Resident Physicians	41	24.7%

Figure 2 displays the demographics of the survey participants in this study.