

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

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**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.

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**Figure 1: Participant Responses to Survey Questions**

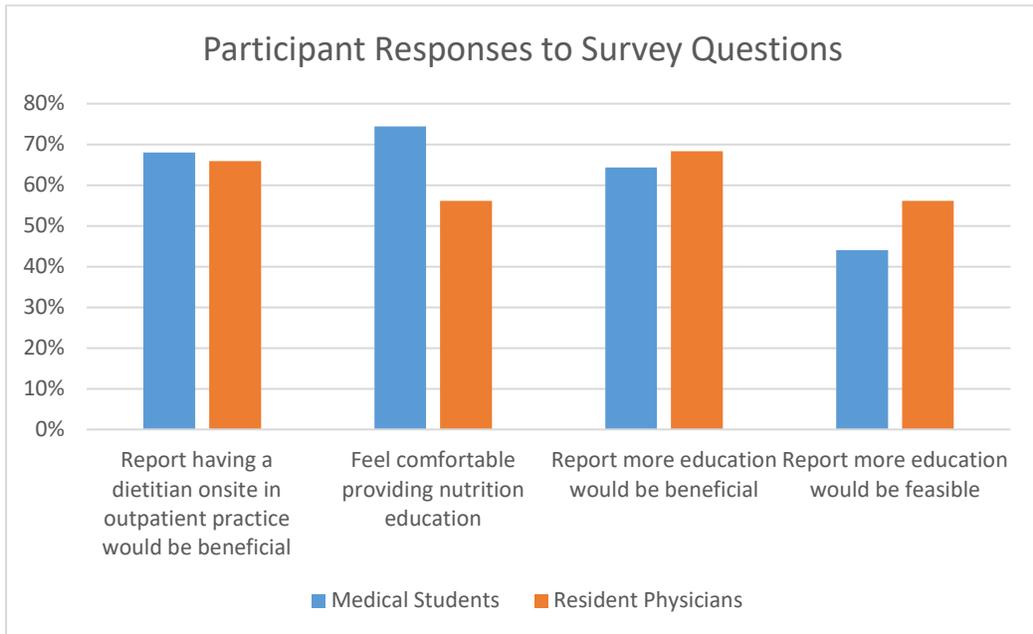


Figure 1 includes the participants who responded to the survey questions with an “extremely” or “very” answer choice to the specified survey questions.

**Figure 2: Participant Demographics**

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

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