

Nutrition Matters

Nutrition Matters: A Conscious Approach when Managing Patients with Mental Illness

BRODY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
7th Annual Medical Education Day

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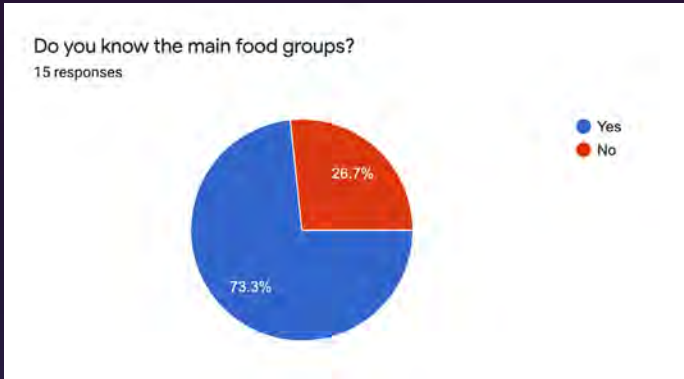
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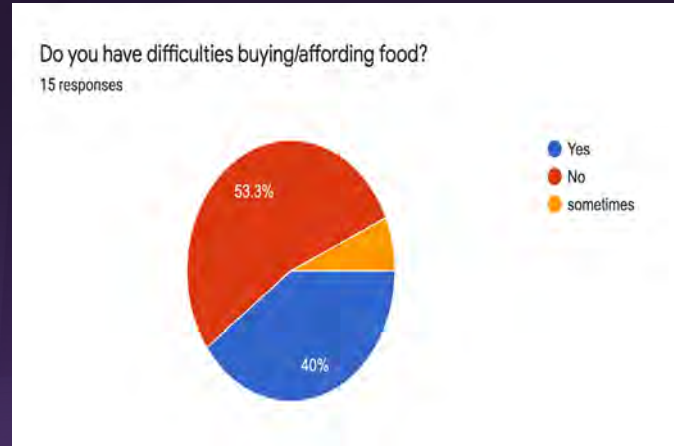
- Patients with mental illness are prescribed psychiatric medications that are helpful for the treatment of mental health, but are negative contributors to their physical health.
- **Aim:** By providing nutritional education and guidance on making healthier food choices, we aimed to inform patients on food groups, portion control, and review of ingredient labels in order to decrease the adverse effects associated with their medication regimen.

- Type of study or project :
- Quality improvement study: Fifteen patients on the behavioral health unit participated in educational sessions focusing on providing information on a healthy diet, portion control and how to prevent metabolic syndrome. These individuals differ with respect to certain factors such as HA1C, BMI, and age
- Type of population:
 - Mentally ill adult patients at Vidant BHU. Patients were included if psychiatrically stable in order to tolerate a 40min class, on antipsychotic medications and mood stabilizers. Not included if acutely psychotic or manic.
- Intervention: Weekly 40-minute class for 6 weeks which focused on patient education on healthy eating and metabolic syndrome prevention as well as resource information for access to healthy food.
 - Participants were taught healthy snack preparation and used models such as “My Plate” to teach correct portions and contents of the main food groups. Upon class completion they received a recipe booklet with ingredients, prices, and directions for 3 healthy meals and a snack. They also received information on local food banks and soup kitchens to provide healthy food options to people facing food insecurities.
 - Participants also completed a pre-and post-class survey about their baseline health knowledge, access to healthy foods, and their perception of the benefit of this class.
- Main outcome measure:
 - Qualitative, data including weight, BMI, medication compliance, and nutrition literacy was collected to assess health outcomes. This was through a pre class survey to assess a patient's base level of understanding about the effects of poor nutrition on their health.

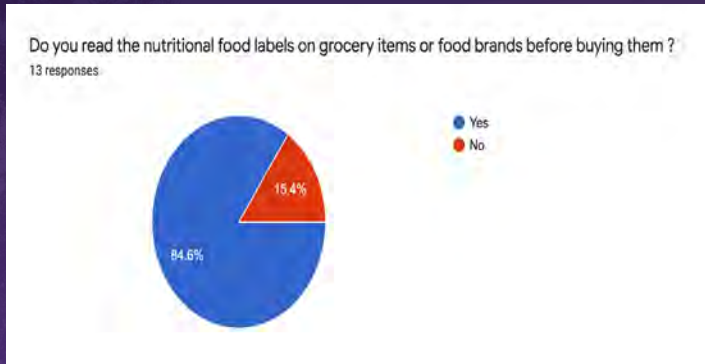
Results



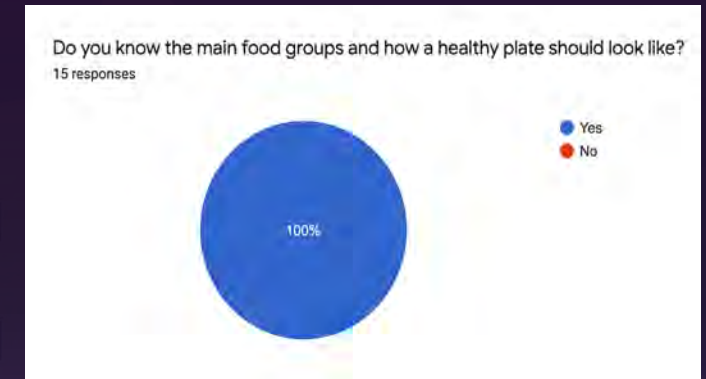
Pre-survey Results: 11 out of 15 participants were aware of the main food groups before the start of the class.



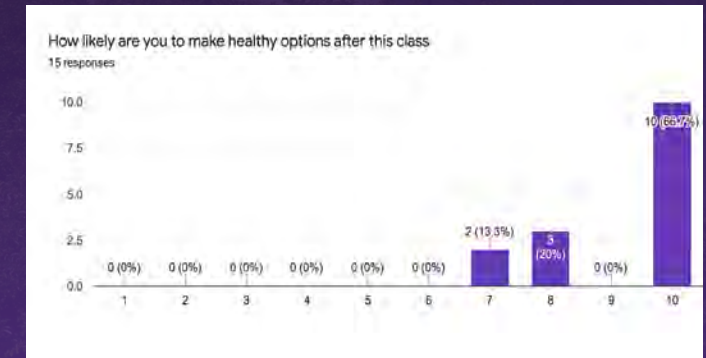
Pre-survey Results: At the start of the class 6 participants reported difficulty accessing food.



Pre-survey Results: At the start of the class 11 participants were aware of nutrition food labels and how to read them



Post-survey Results: By the end of the class all 15 participants were knowledgeable on the main food groups.



Post-survey Results: At the end of the class 10 participants reported that they would make healthier decisions regarding food selection

- It is imperative that clinicians be mindful of the potential risks and benefits of psychiatric medication. The utilization of nutritional advice, medication management, therapy, and physical activity, can improve the overall health of patients with mental illness. Our study showed that given the education, proper tools, and a multidisciplinary approach, patients can benefit from information on how to make healthier decisions to prevent the adverse metabolic effects of their medication regimen.
- Future goals:
 - Continue to provide nutrition classes on the behavioral health unit
 - Following up with patients during clinic visits and providing further education on nutrition
 - Phone follow up to gauge long-term impact on the Nutrition Matters course and interest in similar events in the future
 - Community outreach and events: hosting nutritional advice days on the hospital campus and the local library
 - Nutrition matters walks in order to raise funds for community outreach programs and for the local food pantry and soup kitchen