

The Mediterranean diets in Hospital: is it only Science or Practice?

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Several studies have convincingly shown that the coronary risk profile (lower LDL cholesterol and blood pressure levels) is improved by a Mediterranean diet. That is why all the patients with cardiovascular disease hospitalized in a University Hospital Dubrava Zagreb are on Mediterranean menus. The aims of this study are:

a) to determine how patients hospitalized in a University Hospital Dubrava perceive different attributes of Mediterranean menus, b) to determine factors affecting the level of food consumption, c) to establish a degree of education of patients about the importance of Mediterranean diet in cardiovascular disease. The total of 584 patients with cardiovascular disease (200 female, 384 male, age range 20-81, with a length of stay of 4 days or more) from Zagreb and surroundings were assessed in the study. Patients have been offered colorful platters of food (olive oil, as the dominant fat source, fruit and vegetables, cereal products, fish, legumes, in combination with little meat), except wine, which are the basis of Mediterranean diet. A questionnaire was used to determine the patient's perception of the food quality and levels of food and drink consumption. Results: It was found that 69,7 % of the patients consumed all of the food provided, 19,12% of patients consumed the half, 6,8% of patients consumed some and 4,1% of patients did not consume any of their meals. 13,7 % of patients did not consume all of the food provided because they don't like to eat fish and olive oil. In regard to the habits of fish and olive oil consumption, it is noticed that half of patients consume fish and olive oil rarely. Similar trend is observed in regard with cereal consumption. One third of patient stated that they never consume cereal for breakfast. 45% of patients declared that they learned of that particular kind of nutrition at University hospital Dubrava; furthermore, 68% of patients understand the favourable influence of the Mediterranean diet on health. Conclusions: This study showed that despite of Croatia's advantage of a Mediterranean country, Mediterranean model of diet, appears restricted to older people and to rural areas, whereas urbanized young people depart from it. The results of this study would be helpful for hospital managers and the nutrition departments in making decision on increasing the level of satisfaction and knowledge of patients with diet. In order to update popularize the use of Mediterranean diet for health benefit in hospitals.