

## **A Study To Assess The Knowledge Regarding Diet Therapy Among The Attendants Of Cancer Patients, In A Selected Hospital, Hyderabad**

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**Abstract:** *This study was conducted to assess the knowledge level of attendants of cancer patients regarding cancer diet therapy since diet therapy for cancer patients will help them to regain strength, overcome the side effects of cancer therapies and aid better quality of Life. The objectives of the study were (i) to assess the level of the knowledge about the diet therapy among attendants of cancer patients in Indo-American Cancer hospital, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad and (ii) to seek correlation of selected variables with the level of knowledge regarding diet therapy among attendants of cancer patients. The population in the present study includes attendants of cancer patients between the ages of 25-55 years admitted in Indo-American Hospital. The data for the main study was collected from 10-9-2009 to 13-9-2009 in Indo American Cancer Hospital, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad. Sample size was 30 patients and simple random sampling technique was felt appropriate as study was done on cancer patients who can read and write English and Telugu. The statistics used for the study was descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) and data was interpreted. The sample characteristics were taken in accordance with the age, gender, marital status, educational status and monthly income. The findings related to knowledge revealed that 26.66% of the samples are having below average knowledge, 70% of the samples are having average knowledge and 3.33% of the samples are having above average knowledge levels. Mean knowledge score was higher in people having monthly income >Rs.9000. Hence it is recommended that all the attendants of cancer patients must be given adequate planned teaching program to contribute to prognosis of cancer patients.*

**Keywords:** *Diet therapy, cancer patients, knowledge, alternative therapy, good nutrition*

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### **I. Introduction**

Diet plays an important role both in maintenance of health and prevention of diseases, obtaining various nutrients, the body needs for its normal functioning. It depends on quality and quantity of food one eat's, people have their individual food taste and eating habits and especially the knowledge regarding diet. Cancer patient's nutrition should be good, specific dietary practices influences diet both for better and for worse. Marion M. Lee and Scarlett S. Lin (1999) states in a study done on 'Alternative Therapies Used by Women With Breast Cancer in Four Ethnic Populations' about one half of the women used at least one type of alternative therapy, and about one third used two types; most therapies were used for a duration of less than 6 months. Both the alternative therapies used and factors influencing the choice of therapy varied by ethnicity. Blacks most often used spiritual healing (36%), Chinese most often used herbal remedies (22%), and Latino women most often used dietary therapies (30%) and spiritual healing (26%). Among whites, (35%) used dietary methods and (21%) used physical methods, such as massage and acupuncture. Markus Horneber and Gerd Bueschel (2012) describes in 'How Many Cancer Patients Use Complementary and Alternative Medicine A Systematic Review and Meta analysis' there was some evidence that the use has increased considerably over the past years. (Charles W and Van Way's, "Nutrition secrets")

### **II. Review of Literature**

Van Custsem, E and Arends, J. (2005) conducted a research study to determine whether "the cause and consequences of cancer were associated to malnutrition". Cancer associated malnutrition can result from reduced food intake (due to ignorance and superstitions). The result of this study is nutritional support and its information, addressing the specific needs of this patient group, is required to help improve prognosis and reduce the consequences of cancer – associated nutritional decline.

Argiles, J.M. (2005) conducted a study on "Cancer associated malnutrition". Malnutrition is a common problem among cancer patients, affecting up to 85% of patients. The results of this study show educating the people regarding the diet to be consumed during this period halt malnutrition and improve the outcome in patients with cancer. Denny, A. (2007) studied about "tackling malnutrition among older people in

the Hospital” under nutrition of both macro nutrients and micronutrients is still a surprisingly common problem among older people. Results shows educating the caregivers of the older adult cancer patients lead for good quality of life. Lavino, A. (2007) conducted research, impact of nutrition on quality of life during cancer “the results shows that out of 96 cases taken 54 cases responded and shows that early nutritional intervention may positively impact on quality of life and enhance clinical response in oncology patients.

### **Significance of the Study**

Studies have shown that there are many problems which are arising due to the lack of sufficient knowledge regarding diet therapy. The complexities of these problems forced us to highlight the need for better understanding regarding cancer diet therapy.

Good nutrition is vital to good health and is absolutely essential for health in cancer patients. Chemotherapy or radiation therapy influences eating habits of cancer patient. Baldwin (2006) conducted a study on “Failure of dietetic referral in patients with cancer and its effects.” Many of which result (57%) due to lack of knowledge whose consequences results in impairment of immune function, performances status, muscle function and quality of life. Still the percentage of ignorant people remains very high compared to people who know about it.

### **Statement of Problem**

“A study to assess the knowledge regarding diet therapy among the attendants of cancer patients, in a selected cancer Hospital, Hyderabad.”

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the level of the knowledge about the diet therapy among attendants of cancer patients in a selected Cancer hospital, Hyderabad.
2. To seek correlation of selected variables with the level of knowledge regarding diet therapy among attendants of cancer patients.

### **Assumptions**

1. The attendants of cancer patients will have knowledge regarding diet used for cancer patients.
2. The response of patients to the structured questionnaire on diet therapy and cancer would reflect the true ongoing practice.
3. The knowledge of diet therapy in cancer helps the patient to have proper practice on prevention of ill effects and contributes to prognosis.
4. The knowledge and practices of diet therapy in cancer helps in the reduction of mortality and morbidity among cancer patients.

### **Delimitations**

1. Attendants of cancer patients, Indo-American cancer hospital, Hyderabad.
2. Adult patients having cancer, who are admitted in Indo-American cancer hospital
3. Adult patients who are willing to participate for the study.
4. Adult patients who are able to read and write Telugu.
5. Adult patients who are available during the time of data collection.

### **Variables**

The independent variables consist of Demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, educational status, monthly income while the dependent variable was knowledge on diet therapy among attendants of cancer patients.

## **III. Research Methodology**

Research approach adopted for the study is Qualitative study, also known as non experimental study. The research design used was the descriptive survey, cross sectional study. The present study was aimed at assessing the knowledge regarding diet therapy among the attendants of cancer patients in Indo-American cancer hospital Hyderabad. The independent variables consist of Demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, educational status, monthly income while the dependent variable was knowledge on diet therapy among attendants of cancer patients.

The setting of the study was the Indo-American cancer hospital, Road No: 12, Hyderabad. The population in the present study includes attendants of cancer patients between the ages of 25-55 years admitted in Indo-American Hospital. The data for the main study was collected from 10-9-2009 to 13-9-2009 in Indo American Cancer Hospital. Sample size was 30 patients and simple random sampling technique was felt appropriate as study was done on cancer patients who can read and write English and Telugu. Purposive sampling was used based on the following inclusion criteria:

1. Patient's attendants who are willing to participate in the study.
2. Attendants who cannot read and respond to self rating questions which are prepared in English and Telugu.
3. Attendants who are available at the time of data collection.

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire which consists of two sections; Part A and B. Part A consist of demographic data of attenders of cancer patients, while Part B contained structured questionnaire to assess the knowledge on diet therapy.

Content validity of the tool is established with the help of three experts of Apollo College of nursing. Pilot study was conducted for five patients at Indo-American cancer hospital, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad on 09-09-2009 who were excluded from the main study. The tool was found reliable for conducting the main study.

The structured questionnaire was distributed to the attendants of cancer patients who were willing and available at the time of data collection. Attendants of cancer patients were informed about the purpose of this study and the roles throughout the data collection period so as to obtain full participation, free and frank answers.

The data obtained were analyzed in terms of objectives of study using descriptive statistics. The data on the sample characteristics was described in the form of frequency of percentage.

The data was organized based on the questionnaire. Part A dealt with frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, educational status, monthly income. Part B contained frequency and percentage distribution of dietary consumption (Type of food, Amount of servings) and managements of side effects.

#### **IV. Results And Discussion**

Table 1 describes Frequency percentage distribution of sample by demographic variables. Majority (46.7%) of the study belongs to less than 40 years age group. The sample consists of equal percentage of male and female. Higher number of population (86.7%) belongs to married group. Majority (63.3%) were illiterate or educated up to primary level. Majority (33.3%) of the sample has income below Rs. 3000.

Table 2 describes Frequency and percentage distribution of knowledge scores of attendants of cancer patients on dietary consumption. Majority (76.66%) of population has knowledge scores on diet therapy for cancer patients scored from 6-10 out of 20 which reveals majority of population has average knowledge on cancer diet therapy.

Table 3 describes percentage distribution of knowledge scores of attendants on cancer diet therapy. Majority (70%) of sample have average knowledge and least (3.33%) sample has above average knowledge on cancer diet therapy.

Table 4 describes Mean knowledge score of attendants of cancer patients. The Mean knowledge scores secured by attendants of cancer patients were 8.

Table 5 describes Mean knowledge scores of attendants of cancer patients in relation to selected variables. High (8 out of 20) Mean knowledge scores were found among the age group of below 40 years. Male gender has the highest (10.4) Mean knowledge scores on diet therapy. Married women had better (9.3) Mean knowledge scores than unmarried women. Graduates had the higher (10.3) Mean knowledge scores on diet therapy. Higher (6.2) Mean knowledge scores were found among the monthly income group of Rs. 6001-9000.

The findings of this study have various implications for nursing education, nursing practice, nursing administration and nursing research.

**Nursing Education:** Findings of the study have some implications for nursing education. Nurses who are equipped with up to date knowledge of cancer diet therapy are better persons to impart knowledge regarding diet therapy for cancer patients who will help them to regain strength, overcome the side effects of cancer therapies and aid better quality of life. Nursing curriculum should adequately update and equip the nursing students with knowledge about cancer diet therapy.

**Nursing Practice:** The nurses working in cancer hospitals should practice to teach the required diet necessary for cancer patients. The nurse must identify attendants' doubts and queries about diet therapy that has the potential for problems and refer them to appropriate facilities.

**Nursing Administration:** Nursing administrator could take active part in developing cost effective educative materials so that they can encourage the nurses to conduct personal interviews for the cancer patients related to importance of diet therapy and side effects bothering them.

**Nursing Research:** This study helps the nurse researcher to understand the level of knowledge regarding diet therapy among attendants of cancer patients and factors influencing knowledge like age, gender, marital status, educational status and monthly income. Research can be conducted on the barriers that make the people unaware about cancer diet therapy.

#### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The sample characteristics are taken in accordance with the age, gender, marital status, educational status and monthly income. The findings related to knowledge revealed that 26.66% of the samples are having below

average knowledge, 70% of the samples are having average knowledge and 3.33% of the samples are having above average knowledge levels.

And in accordance with the selected variables, the knowledge scores are:

- a. Mean knowledge score was higher in the age group of <40 years.
- b. Male gender has higher mean knowledge score.
- c. Married population is having higher mean knowledge score.
- d. Educational status of secondary, especially graduates are having higher mean knowledge score.
- e. Mean knowledge score was higher in people having monthly income >Rs.9000.

## V. Conclusion

The study assessed the knowledge level of attendants of cancer patients regarding cancer diet therapy 70% of the attendants are having average level of knowledge.

- a. Mean knowledge score was higher in the age group of <40 years (8)
- b. Male gender has higher mean knowledge score (10.4)
- c. Married population has higher mean knowledge score (9.3)
- d. Educational status of secondary, especially graduates have higher mean knowledge score (10.3)
- e. Mean knowledge score was higher in people having monthly income >Rs.9000 (7).

## LIMITATIONS

1. Standardized tools could not be used because of non availability
2. Study did not attempt to provide knowledge to attendants of cancer patients on diet therapy or to measure the retention of knowledge gain, due to time limitation.
3. Study was confined to small number of 30 attendants of cancer patients which limits the generalization of the study.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Replications of the study could be done with a large sample to validate and generalize the findings and in different settings.
2. Replications of the study can be done with various dietary aspects of issues bothering cancer patients.
3. Planned teaching programme can be used to improve the knowledge regarding cancer diet therapy.

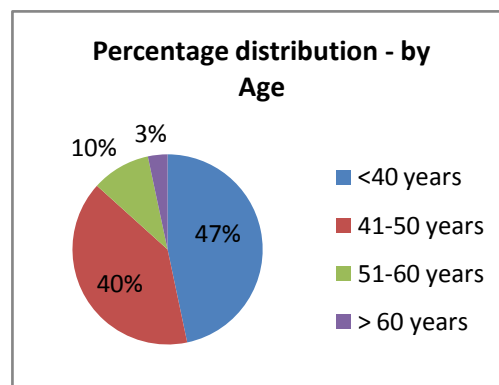
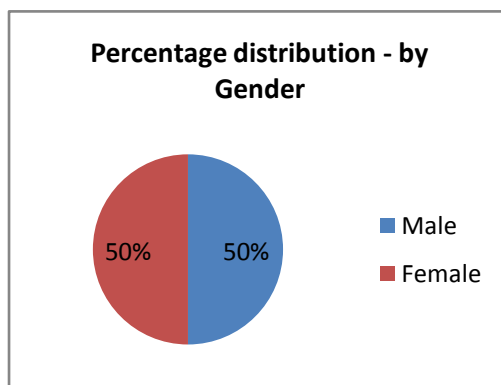
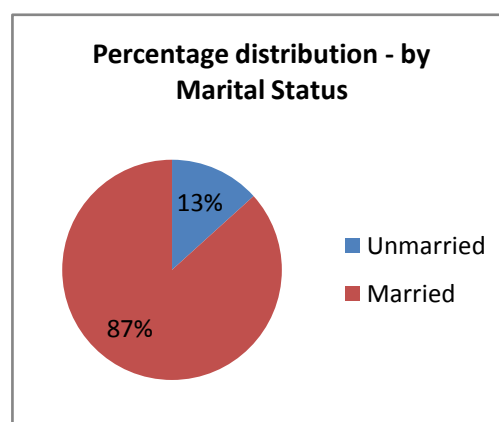
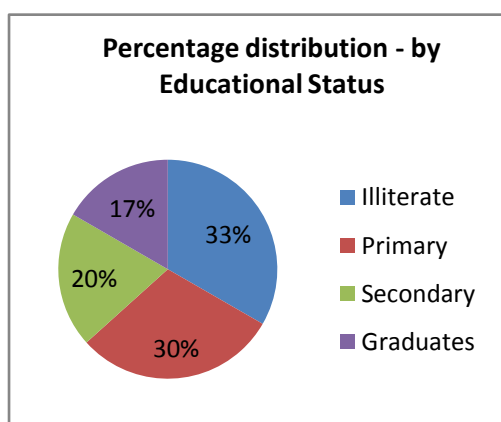
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**Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of sample by demographic variables**

Sl. No.	Sample Characteristics	Frequency (30)	Percentage (100)
1.	<b>Age:</b>		
	• <40 years	14	46.7
	• 41-50 years	12	40
	• 51-60 years	3	10
2.	<b>Gender:</b>		
	• Male	15	50
3.	<b>Marital Status:</b>		
	• Unmarried	4	13.3
4.	<b>Educational Status:</b>		
	• Illiterate	10	33.3
	• Primary	9	30
	• Secondary	6	20
	• Graduates	5	16.66
5.	<b>Monthly Family Income:</b>		
	• <Rs. 3,000	10	33.3
	• Rs. 3,001-6,000	8	26.7
	• Rs. 6,001-9,000	8	26.7
	• >Rs. 9,000	4	13.33



**Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Knowledge Scores of Attendants on Dietary Consumption (Type of Food, Amount of Servings) and Management of Side Effects (N=30)**

CLASS INTERVAL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
0-5	6	20%
6-10	23	76.66%
11-15	1	3.33%
16-20	0	0%

**Table 3. Percentage distribution of knowledge scores of attendants on dietary consumption (type of food, amount of servings) and management of side effects (N=30)**

KNOWLEDGE LEVEL	SCORE RANGE	PERCENTAGE
Below average	1-6	26.66%
Average	7-12	70%
Above average	Above 12	3.33%

**Table 4. Mean Knowledge Score Secured By Attendants of Cancer Patients**

TEST	MEAN
Knowledge Test on Cancer Diet Therapy	8

**Table 5. Mean Knowledge Scores of Attendants of Cancer Patients in Relation to Selected Variables**

SL NO	SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	MEAN KNOWLEDGE SCORE
1	<b>Age:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &lt;40 years</li> <li>• 41-50 years</li> <li>• 51-60 years</li> <li>• &gt; 60 years</li> </ul>	8 6.4 5 4
2	<b>Gender:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male</li> <li>• Female</li> </ul>	10.4 9.8
3	<b>Marital Status:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unmarried</li> <li>• Married</li> </ul>	9.3 8
4	<b>Educational Status:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illiterate</li> <li>• Primary</li> <li>• Secondary</li> <li>• Graduates</li> </ul>	5 7 8.6 10.3
5	<b>Monthly Family Income:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &lt;Rs. 3,000</li> <li>• Rs. 3,001-6,000</li> <li>• Rs. 6,001-9,000</li> <li>• &gt;Rs. 9,000</li> </ul>	5 5.7 6.2 7