

WEB-BASED LEARNING ON MEDICAL NUTRITION THERAPY FOR ADULT-TYPE 2 DIABETES PATIENTS: A PRIMARY SURVEY

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BACKGROUND/AIMS: Web-based learning (WBL) became popular in Japan especially outside of the medical field. In 2004, over 60% households in Japan had access to the internet, and more and more Japanese use information technology (IT). It is well established that medical nutrition therapy (MNT) is the key to successful glycemic control for type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) patients. Patient education is required to meet individual needs; therefore WBL is a promising educational tool, being easily accessible for users, and modifiable for providers according to patient needs. In order to improve patient care, we conducted a primary survey to evaluate patients' preferences on WBL for MNT.

METHODS: Fifty-eight consecutive patients with recently diagnosed T2DM (mean age 55; males 53%). This primary survey was a face-to-face interview using both structured and open questionnaires, which was conducted at the first individual MNT session by registered dietitians.

RESULTS: A total of 59% of patients had internet access. Eighty-seven percent thought WBL was helpful for MNT. Eighty-three percent agreed to continue WBL although 38% of them had no internet access. Half of patients also liked traditional teaching sessions because of bidirectional communication. Readability was the most difficult part of WBL especially for elderly patients. There was positive correlation between patient satisfaction with WBL and willingness to continue ($p=0.005$).

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS:

WBL is a favorable teaching tool in this survey; however, access to the internet and readability of web site are limiting factors. Both sample and selection bias were limitations of this study, and caution is needed when generalizing our results to other populations.

Key words: Medical nutrition therapy, Web-based learning, Type 2 diabetes mellitus