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Developing, implementing and evaluating a nutrition and exercise group education sessions in a growing bariatric unit.

Category: Integrated Health

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Bariatric surgery is growing rapidly and the past 10 years the number of procedures performed has almost tripled. Patient education, their readiness for change and active involvement in their post op diet affects the outcome of their procedure. A pilot study showed that 35% of patients do not the information provided, only 57% prepare for their post op diet and 57% rely on low protein, low nutrition value food items. This highlighted that there is a need for education in the hospital but an innovative approach was needed.

Our aim was to develop, implement and evaluate a nutrition and exercise group program in order to improve the service delivery and provide comprehensive education for bariatric surgery inpatients.

Results: Patients were screened and those who were well were invited to attend the group sessions, others seen individually. The groups were lead by clinicians and conducted in a supportive environment. Questions were welcome throughout the session and handouts provided. Patients were invited to fill in an anonymous questionnaire and hand it in on discharge.

104 patients who attend the group sessions responded to the survey. 99% reported receiving dietetic advice preoperatively. 51% had not prepared meals. 91% reported being comfortable in a group setting, 100% found the session useful and 88% felt that it covered everything for this stage. The most positive feedbacks included: being in a supportive environment with others who have also had bariatric surgery, having a forum to ask questions, reviewing and reinforcing previous advice as well as receiving hand outs. The additional recommendations will be included in future sessions.

Conclusion: Group education sessions are an effective way to deliver nutrition advice. These sessions helped patients gain more confidence, reinforced the priorities and the therapeutic diet in the acute postop with the aim to prevent complications and meet nutritional requirements.