ABSTRACT

Purpose: Inspire the use of Mediterranean principles in practice among West Virginia healthcare professionals over a one-year period, by providing online education and experiential learning.

Study Design: Over the course of 16-weeks, a multidisciplinary group of practicing healthcare professionals will engage in virtual coursework. The group will then spend 2-weeks in Tuscany, Italy immersed into the culture itself. Data measures such as knowledge, attitudes, self-efficacy, and MD Score will be monitored by surveys at periodic time points.

Results: The study sample consists of 15 multidisciplinary health professionals currently practicing in West Virginia with an average age of 43±16.92. Baseline measures show that out of these 61%, 6% incorrectly answered two or more nutrition knowledge questions. Additionally, 87% agree that most physicians are not adequately trained to discuss nutrition with patients, and 20% do not believe that any healthcare professional can impact dietary behavior. Among these individuals, the mean MD Score was 8.6±3.1 out of a possible 17 points.

Conclusion: Baseline demographics reveal that the sample is already experienced and familiar with some Mediterranean principles. Additionally, they are highly interested in improving their personal and professional lives. Data measures post education and immersion will gauge progress and implementation, to identify the effectiveness of a “learn first, practice second” style intervention.

Intervention: The purpose of this study is to inspire the use of Mediterranean principles in practice among West Virginia healthcare professionals over a one-year period, by providing online education and experiential learning.

INTRODUCTION

• Obesity has tripled between 1975 and 2016, and is often accompanied by other health concerns

• A Mediterranean style dietary pattern is supported by the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and has shown positive results for chronic disease treatment and prevention

• Poor health status is associated with lower levels of nutrition knowledge

• Behavior change consisting of both lifestyle and dietary alterations may be limited by a lack of nutrition knowledge among health care professionals

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Survey Development
• Topics: attitudes, self-efficacy, nutrition knowledge, practice behavior, patient relationship, readiness to change, culinary competence, cultural competence, eating competence, and Mediterranean Diet Score
• 56 total items

Recruitment
• Carried out in waves
 1. Email WV professional associations
 2. Hold information sessions
 3. Distribute flyers in Morgantown, WV
 4. Email WV higher education institutions

BACKGROUND

• iCHOP Pilot study (2016) examined knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy regarding nutrition in medicine among WVU medical students

• Results from this pilot study revealed positive attitudes, limited knowledge, and low self-efficacy

• These location specific findings, combined with data from the literature suggesting a lack of nutrition knowledge among health care professionals outside of the realm of registered dietitians, prompted iCHOP Mediterranean

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study is to inspire the use of Mediterranean principles in practice among West Virginia health care professionals over a one-year period, by providing online education and experiential learning.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

• Findings will reveal the effectiveness of an intervention composed of online education and experiential learning

• The intervention will increase awareness of the diverse applicability of nutrition in medicine

• With increased knowledge, these health professionals will increase the use of culinary medicine in practice

• Health status of patients or clients across many health disciplines in both rural and urban areas will improve by way of Mediterranean principles