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The Highs and Lows of Protein: What Do Peritoneal Dialysis Patients Really Know?

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Dialysis patients historically have difficulty keeping albumin and phosphorus levels within therapeutic ranges on a consistent basis. The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine outpatient peritoneal dialysis patient's nutritional knowledge related to albumin levels and to determine if increasing egg consumption would result in an increase of albumin levels. This study was conducted using a prospective quantitative pre-test/post-test knowledge test and assessing the recorded pre-albumin and pre-phosphorus lab values from the electronic medical record which are drawn each month and compare them over a one month period. A convenience sample collection was conducted among thirty adult peritoneal dialysis patients who were followed at the outpatient dialysis center each month. The knowledge test consisted of a picture page design comparing foods that were higher in protein to determine each patient's pre-knowledge of foods high in protein to those foods lower in protein. The researchers also asked each participant how often they consumed eggs on a weekly basis. The researchers consisted of a nurse faculty member who served as the primary investigator and a senior nutrition student who assisted in development of the pre-test post-test and the education portion of the study. The study was conducted from March 10, 2017 until April 10, 2017. The findings in this study suggest that education continues to be a key component for positive outcome for this patient population. The findings also revealed that knowledge levels did increase significantly when comparing pre-test /post-test scores. The albumin levels was slightly increased but not significant. The researchers concluded knowledge acquisition did occur in this population. One limitation of the study was due to the short nature of the study (one month) if it were possible to complete a longitudinal study then perhaps the albumin levels would have increased significantly.

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