

DIFFERENCE IN OPINIONS ON THE NEED FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET AMONG PHYSIOTHERAPY STUDENTS BASED ON THEIR PLACE OF RESIDENCE

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Background and Aims

The Mediterranean diet (MD) is a dietary pattern characterized by the consumption of large amounts of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, seeds, nuts, and fish. It is associated with reduced disability in multiple sclerosis, reduction of symptoms in cognitive impairments, and neurovegetative diseases (3), which can indirectly lead to stronger muscles and improved mobility. The aim of this study is to examine the knowledge of physiotherapy students (PS) regarding their awareness of the MD concept, based on their place of residence, and their opinions on the usefulness of the MD in the prevention of poor posture and its impact on learning.

Methods

In this prospective longitudinal study, 79 physiotherapy students participated, of whom 48 were from the city and 31 from rural areas. All participants completed a validated questionnaire about their awareness of the MD concept, the frequency of MD consumption, and their opinions on whether MD could influence posture improvement and, consequently, facilitate learning. Depending on the normality of the distribution of the results, statistical analysis was performed using the chi-square test and the Shapiro-Wilk test. All results were set at a significance level of $p < 0.05$.

Results

A total of 79% of the physiotherapy students were familiar with the MD concept, with no differences based on their place of residence ($p = 0.11$). 85% consume MD at least once a week, with significantly higher consumption ($p = 0.04$) and frequency ($p < 0.01$) in the city. 66% of the participants believe that MD can influence body posture, and consequently, improve learning (89%), with no significant differences based on place of residence (posture $p = 0.48$; learning $p = 0.58$).

Conclusion

Although a relatively large number of physiotherapy students are familiar with the MD concept and believe that it can positively affect posture and thus facilitate learning, 15% still consume it less than once a week, with significantly lower consumption in rural areas.

Keywords: mediterranean diet, physiotherapy students, posture