

High Phosphate-Containing Foods and Beverages: Perceptions of the Future Healthcare Providers on Their Harmful Effect in Excessive Consumption

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Abstract : Phosphorus is an essential nutrient which is regularly consumed with food and exists in the body as phosphate. Phosphate is an important component of cellular structures and needed for bone mineralization. Excessive accumulation of phosphate is an important driving factor of mortality in chronic renal failure patients; of relevance, these patients are usually provided health care by doctors, nurses, and pharmacists. Hence, this study was planned to determine the level of awareness of the future healthcare providers about the phosphate-containing foods and beverages and to assess their knowledge on the harmful effects of excess phosphate consumption. A questionnaire was developed and distributed among the year-1 medical, nursing and pharmacy students. 432 medical, nursing and pharmacy students responded with age ranging from 18-24 years. About 70% of the respondents were female with a majority (90.7%) from Malay ethnicity. Among the respondents, 29.9% were medical, 35.4% were the pharmacy and 34.7% were nursing students. 79.2% students knew that phosphate was an important component of the body, but only 61.8% knew that consuming too much phosphate could be harmful to the body. Despite 97% of the students knew that carbonated soda contained high sugar, surprisingly 77% of them did not know the presence of high phosphate in the same soda drinks; in the similar line of observation, 67% did not know the presence of it in the fast food. However, it was encouraging that 94% of the students wanted to know more about the effects of phosphate consumption, 74.3% were willing to give up drinking soda and eating fast food, and 52% considered taking green coconut water instead of soda drinks. It is, therefore, central to take an educational initiative to increase the awareness of the future healthcare providers about phosphate-containing food and its harmful effects in excessive consumptions.

Keywords : high phosphate containing foods and beverages, excessive consumption, future health care providers, phosphorus

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