Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Renal Dietitian Roles

Rosa K Hand, MS, RDN, LD¹; Jerrilyn D Burrowes, PhD, RD²
1–Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Chicago IL, USA 2–Long Island University Post, Brookville NY, USA

1) Background
Recent attention has been focused on the limited time the nephrology dietitian in outpatient dialysis has to spend on nutrition assessments (1, 2). Some nephrologists suggest this is due to increasing responsibility of the dietitian in the area of mineral and bone disorder (MBD) management (2). Previous work has characterized the roles and responsibilities of the nephrology dietitian, but has not collected information on the perceived importance of these roles from dietitians or other disciplines (3, 4).

2) Objectives
The objective of this survey was to describe and compare the perceived ranking of 30 roles and responsibilities of the renal dietitian in terms of importance and time consumption, both by dietitians and by other members of the dialysis care team.

3) Methods
A link to an anonymous online survey was sent to all members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Renal Practice Group (n=2329), the National Kidney Foundation’s Council on Renal Nutrition (n=986), and the International Society for Renal Nutrition and Metabolism (n=67); it was also posted on the Renal and Urology News website. A reminder email was sent halfway through the 21 day data-collection period, in April 2014. IRB approval was obtained from the American Academy of Family Physicians. A waiver of signed consent was obtained, although participants read and agreed to a consent before beginning the survey. The number of questions varied based on answers to previous questions but ranged from 20 to 26. Analysis was descriptive only.

4) Results
•522 individuals (16%) began the survey
•510 worked in outpatient dialysis and were eligible to participate in the study
•370 (72.5%) completed the survey

5) Conclusion:
While most respondents agreed on the importance or time consumption of the top and bottom activities, there was spread in those that were ranked in positions 3 through 9; for example, implementing and developing protocols, other activities, anthropometry, SGA, evaluation of nPNA and dialysis adequacy. This was particularly true in the intervention roles and responsibilities, where the best agreement was on the importance of counseling about protein needs.

50% of respondents indicated there were other important activities that had not been covered in the survey; 70.7% indicated there were other time consuming activities. Themes that emerged in write-in answers for importance and time consuming tasks that were not covered in the choices included:
•Management of lab draws
•Managing interdisciplinary assessments (making sure other disciplines complete)
•Clerical work involving patient reports and their mailing
•Signing patients up for the company pharmacy and tracking those patients
•Documentation per CMS regulations
•Facility reporting to CMS’ ESRD Information System via CROWNweb
•Conducting activities to educate and motivate patients
•Acting as care coordinator
•Coordinating with other facilities (e.g., nursing homes)
•Helping patients navigate insurance and supplement programs
•Interacting with families.

Table 1: Demographic and Work Characteristics of US dietitian respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years in dietetics</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years in nephrology</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total hours paid per week</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>11.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of patients cared for</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>1115</td>
<td>103.1</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of dietitians at primary facility</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Ranking of nephrology dietitian roles and responsibilities by importance and amount of time consumed. Variances between the importance and time ranking are in bold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance*</th>
<th>Time consuming**</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Roles and Responsibilities (from reference 3)</td>
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Table: Assessments from KOCO

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References: