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A Descriptive Study to Assess the Level of Knowledge on Balanced Diet and Its Importance among Post Covid Geriatrics with Comorbid Illness Residing in Lawspet, Puducherry

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ABSTRACT
A vital component of health is balanced eating, particularly for elderly people with concomitant conditions. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the significance of diet in the healing process because it can significantly improve immunity and general wellbeing. Geriatrics' nutritional needs can be addressed throughout the post-COVID phase, but doing so requires a thorough understanding of balanced meals and their importance. This study aims to assess the level of knowledge on balanced diets and its importance among post COVID geriatrics with comorbid illness to identify potential areas of improvement in their dietary habits and health outcomes. This descriptive study aims to investigate the level of knowledge on balanced diet and its importance among post COVID geriatrics with Co-morbid illness. A descriptive study was conducted among post COVID geriatric patients (aged 60 years and above) with comorbid illnesses. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on participants' knowledge about balanced diets and its significance. The questionnaire comprised of demographic information, dietary habits, awareness of balanced nutrition, and its impact on their comorbid conditions. A total of 200 post COVID geriatric patients with comorbid illnesses participated in the study. The findings revealed a mixed level of knowledge regarding balanced diets and their importance. While some participants, around 65% (130 individuals) are aware of the importance of a balanced diet in post-COVID recovery and managing comorbidities, while the remaining 35% (70 individuals) may not fully recognize its significance.The study highlights the need for targeted nutritional education and interventions among post COVID geriatric patients with comorbid illnesses to improve their understanding of balanced diets and its importance in promoting recovery and managing their health conditions. Healthcare providers and rehabilitation centers should prioritize nutrition counselling and support to enhance the overall health and well-being of this vulnerable population during the post COVID period.
Keywords:COVID-19, geriatrics, comorbid illnesses, balanced diet, nutrition, post COVID recovery, healthcare education.

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INTRODUCTION

In this century, aging is a major issue for many nations [1]. According to projections, there will be approximately 1500 million senior people on the planet by 2050, up from an estimated 524 million in 2010. Developing nations will see the majority of these growth [2]. The global objectives include putting an end to hunger, ensuring healthy lifestyles, and promoting wellbeing for all ages [3].

The nutritional status is impacted by the loss in appetite and food consumption that is a result of aging. Preventing elderly malnutrition has been deemed one of the finest methods for attaining good aging as the population ages continues to rise [4].

India is quickly moving toward a future when a sizable share of the population is 60 years of age or older due to changing demographics. The COVID-19 pandemic's limits to reduce virus transmission have a negative impact on the elderly's Quality of Life (QoL) [5].

Nutritional status is impacted by a fall in appetite and food consumption that is linked to aging. Preventing elderly malnutrition has been deemed one of the finest methods for attaining good aging as the population

ages continues to rise. For a variety of causes, including weight loss, a lack of financial assistance, and insufficient access to food, older persons are susceptible to malnutrition. According to earlier research, lifestyle factors and sociodemographic traits affect older persons' nutritional condition.

To assess the level of knowledge regarding balanced diet and its importance among post COVID geriatrics with co-morbid illness.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

In India, poor nutrition and health problems, such as communicable and non-communicable diseases, exacerbate the issue of the elderly's health. A vicious circle between morbidity and malnutrition exists. Those who are at danger of malnutrition can stop losing weight with a prompt intervention. Unfortunately, the precise estimation of undernutrition in this age range in study has received little justification.[6]

A vital component of health is balanced eating, particularly for elderly people with concomitant conditions. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the significance of diet in the healing process because it can significantly improve immunity and general wellbeing. Geriatrics' nutritional needs can be addressed throughout the post-COVID phase, but doing so requires a thorough understanding of balanced meals and their importance.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A Descriptive study to assess the level of knowledge on balanced diet, and its importance among post COVID geriatrics with co-morbid illness residing in Lawspet area, Puducherry.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study recruits post-COVID geriatric individuals (aged 60 years and above) with co-morbid illnesses using convenience sampling method. The sample size is 200. The inclusion criteria were post COVID person aged above 60 years with co morbid illness, those who are willing to participate in the study and those who can speak English and Tamil. The exclusion criteria were geriatrics those who are not willing to participate. The tools include section – A socio demographic variables and section – B includes a knowledge questionnaire. Assessment of knowledge was done using multiple choice questionnaires which is prepared by the investigator. The total score is 10. Each question has four options with correct answer. The score 8-10 indicates adequate knowledge, 5-7 indicates moderate knowledge and 0-4 indicates inadequate knowledge.

PROCEDURE:

After obtaining ethical approval, eligible participants are invited to participate voluntarily. The objectives of the study was informed to all the participants. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants. Baseline data was collected and they were assessed for their knowledge level using a knowledge questionnaire. Data was collected from each participant for about 15 – 20 minutes.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of subjects according to demographic variables. N = 200

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
AGE IN YEARS		
60 – 64	30	15
65-69	45	22.5
70-74	55	27.5
75-9	40	20
80-84	25	12.5
85 +	5	2.5
GENDER		
Male	90	45
Female	110	55
EDUCATION		
Primary	16	8
Secondary	16	8
High school	84	42
Higher secondary	44	44
Degree	40	40
SOURCE OF INCOME		
Salary	30	15
Pensioner	24	12
Dependent	146	73
ECONOMIC STATUS		
< 10000	130	65

>10000	70	35
CO MORBID CONDITION		
Hypertension	60	30
Diabetes mellitus	45	225
COPD	35	17.5
Heart disease	30	15
Arthritis	25	12.5
Others	5	2.5
DIET PATTERN		
Vegetarian	64	32
Non Vegetarian	136	68
SOURCE OF HEALTH INFORMATION		
Health professionals	142	71
Relatives and friends	44	22
Mass media	14	7

The above table 1, shows that among 200 participants 55were in the age group of 70-74, 110were female, 146 were dependent, 136 were non vegetarian and 142 had acquired health information from health professionals.

Table 2: Knowledge level of study participant [N = 200]

KNOWLEDGE LEVEL	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Adequate	50	25
Moderate	80	40
Inadequate	70	35

The above table 2, shows that 25% of the participants (50 individuals) possessed adequate knowledge on balanced diet and its importance. These participants are well aware of essential nutrients, dietary guidelines, and the role of nutrition in post-COVID recovery and managing comorbidities.Around 40% of the participants (80 individuals) possessed moderate knowledge on balanced diet and its importance. They understand the basics of nutrition but may have some gaps or misconceptions. 35% of the participants (70 individuals) have inadequate knowledge in understanding of balanced diet. These individuals have limited awareness and misconceptions about nutrition.

DATA ANALYSIS:
Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The results depict that among 200 participants, around 65% (130 individuals) are aware of the importance of a balanced diet in post-COVID recovery and managing comorbidities, while the remaining 35% (70 individuals) may not fully recognize its significance. Similar findings were reported by the study, which reveals 65.8% reports satisfactory nutritional knowledge and 28.3% had only good knowledge.

CONCLUSION
The study highlights the need for targeted nutritional education and interventions among post COVID geriatric patients with comorbid illnesses to improve their understanding of balanced diets and its importance in promoting recovery and managing their health conditions. Healthcare providers and rehabilitation centres should prioritize nutrition counselling and support to enhance the overall health and well-being of this vulnerable population during the post COVID period.

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