ABSTRACT

The Adult Down Syndrome Center of Western Pennsylvania has recently received grant funding through the Shadyside Hospital Foundation to implement nutrition services for a trial period. The Center serves adults with Down Syndrome and their families who have increased nutrition support needs due to higher risk for chronic disease and barriers to adequate care. Through the grant, a UPMC registered dietitian and a University of Pittsburgh dietetic intern have joined the Center to provide nutrition counseling and education. Overall, the aim of the program is to increase the health and wellness of patients through accessible, informed nutritional services.

OBJECTIVES

a) Increase accessibility to nutrition services
b) Identify nutrition needs of the community
c) Participation goal of 30 patients
d) Incorporate at least one group nutrition education session
e) Encourage healthy lifestyle behaviors
f) Increase cultural competence

MATERIALS & METHODS

Population Needs Survey

- Question 4: Please rank the categories from the above question to indicate which you would be most interested in (1) to least interested in (7). The graph shown below represents the percentage of participants who were most interested in the respective categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased awareness of physical activity and nutrition</td>
<td>38.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased knowledge of nutrition needs</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased physical activity level and hydration</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage and motivate patients to meet their nutrition goals</td>
<td>11.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual goals are met and evaluated (at least one goal is achieved) with the dietitian</td>
<td>0.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic disease symptoms or complications are even beginning to improve</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULTS

First year of the program will terminate when funding term is over (summer 2022). Success will be determined by the following:

- Number of patients who completed at least 1 nutrition counseling session (at least 30 to meet goal)
- 20 patients total, 2 follow-ups
- Scheduled and completed follow-ups with the dietitian
- Progress with individual patient goals
- Feedback form participants

Due to the fact that Institutional Review Board paperwork was not completed, the program was prevented from conducting research. In the future, we hope to be able to collect data on the following outcomes:

- Weight and/or BMI
- Physical activity from Fitbits
- Reported hydration
- Specific patient feedback

CONCLUSIONS

Important takeaways:

- Increased accessbility through virtual services at no cost to the patients and families
- Free Fitbits and water bottles to the patients create motivators for healthy-habit forming.
- The dietitian and dietetic intern will gain cultural competence through working with the resource coordinator and MD who specializes in caring for adults with Down Syndrome

Limitations:

- Grant only funds one year at a time (services are contingent upon proposal approval)
- Measurable outcomes are limited which makes it more difficult to prove various aspects of success
- Workload for dietitian has been determined to be more than time allotted for in grant proposal

Future Considerations:

- Expansion of community partnerships to improve continuity of care
- Increase group education sessions
- Addition of a second casual RD to manage workload
- Incorporation of increased visual methods to teach individuals with Down Syndrome, ex: virtual cooking demos

REFERENCES


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Shadyside Hospital Foundation for funding this program.