

Abstract Title

What is the effect of the multidisciplinary nature of primary care settings on dietitians' weight management practices?

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Abstract

Introduction: In Canada, multidisciplinary primary care settings are relatively new and were put in place to address the rise in chronic diseases, including obesity. Registered dietitians (RDs) play an important role in these clinical settings by providing Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) to patients. Studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of their weight management approach. However, it is unclear how the team-based nature of these settings influences RDs' weight management practices.

Objective: To understand the perception of RDs regarding the effects of the multidisciplinary setting on weight management practices. **Methods:** Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 dietitians working in multidisciplinary primary care settings in Ontario. All interviews were audio-recorded with the participant's informed consent and transcribed verbatim. Two researchers coded the data independently using a thematic analysis approach. All themes emerged inductively and themes were refined iteratively.

Results: Three main themes emerged: interprofessional collaboration, perceived benefits to patients, and conflicting approach and beliefs. Inter-professional collaboration was facilitated through access to various health professionals and time-effective referral processes as well as knowledge exchange and communication. The team-based nature of these clinics was also believed to allow for continuity in the delivery of care. Dietitians' also perceived multidisciplinary clinics to have benefits for patients by allowing for convenient scheduling, consistent messaging, and motivation. Specifically, participants believed that when various health professionals are conveying the same message to patients, it improved patient motivation. The final theme was the possibility of conflicting approaches and beliefs between health professionals. However, there were ways to address these conflicting approaches through clinical meetings and education.

Conclusions: Multidisciplinary clinical care settings had positive effects on RDs' weight management practices and patient care. **Significance to the field of dietetics:** Understanding how these team-based settings affect RDs' weight management practices is essential to promote best practices in primary care.