

## **Abstract Title**

The efficacy of intensive nutrition interventions provided by Registered Dietitians in a psychiatric hospital on health outcomes and nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

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## **Abstract**

**Introduction:** Individuals with severe mental illness (SMI) are at higher risk for poor physical health. Nutrition interventions provided by RDs positively affect physical health outcomes and nutrition knowledge, attitudes and practices in SMI populations.

**Objective:** To compare an intensive dietetic service model with the current referral-base standard of care at a psychiatric hospital to better understand health outcomes and nutrition knowledge, attitudes and practices.

**Methods:** This prospective randomized study was approved by the Waypoint REB, it includes 21 consenting participants from a 13-week Concurrent Disorders Program(CDP) with stable mental health. Participants were randomized to receive intensive nutrition services or the standard of care. Outcome indicators were monitored at baseline, mid-point, and post-treatment. Quantitative data was collected and analyzed using SPSS.

**Results:** 21 participants completed the study; 10 control(6 males, 4 females) and 11 treatment (5 male, 6 female). The mean age of treatment and control participants is 38.7 and 35.9 years, respectively. Weight and waist circumference (WC) at baseline were not significantly different between the groups. The treatment group experienced a median weight gain of 1.8kg ( $p=0.7$ ), and a median WC increase of 1.98cm ( $p=0.3$ ). The control group had a median weight gain of 2.6kg ( $p=0.08$ ), and a median WC increase of 0.38cm ( $p=0.7$ ). Neither group displayed significant weight or WC changes; however weight gain was larger in the control group.

**Conclusion:** Intensive dietetic interventions in a population with SMI has many benefits for health outcomes relating to nutrition. Psychiatric hospitals should consider offering dietetic services that provide more contact with patients than referral-based dietetic services. This study had a small sample size and further research would be needed to support this evidence.

**Significance:** This study will contribute evidence-based practice to support the importance of regular nutrition related health teaching by RDs in a population with SMI.