

Abstract Title: Dietitian insights on a practice tool to assess taste and smell alterations in hemodialysis patients
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Introduction: Individuals with chronic kidney disease (CKD) requiring hemodialysis (HD) are at risk of malnutrition. Many HD patients also report taste and smell alterations (TSAs) which could negatively impact dietary intake and overall health. Currently no tool exists for dietitians (RDs) to assess TSAs in CKD.

Objective: To adapt the “Taste and Smell Survey” for Cancer Patients for use in HD Patients.

Methods: Participants were RDs in Alberta with current or previous experience in HD, recruited in partnership with Alberta Health Services. The original Cancer survey is a 14 question scored tool used to determine patient-perceived severity of TSAs. An online questionnaire was developed to ask RDs about (1) the presence and severity of TSAs observed in HD patients, (2) if questions from each section of the Cancer survey would be useful in assessment of TSAs in HD patients, and (3) for other comments regarding an assessment tool.

Results: 17 RDs completed the online questionnaire. Among respondents, 59% identified that TSAs were present “Very Often” in HD patients and 41% indicated “Sometimes”. The following proportion of respondents chose “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that each respective section of the Cancer survey would be useful in their HD practice: Screening questions for TSA (94%), persistent taste in mouth (94%), if drugs interfere with taste or smell (53%), changes to basic tastes and smell since starting treatment (65%), significance of TSAs in the last 3 months (100%), and how TSAs affect quality of life (100%).

Conclusions: This online questionnaire confirmed that RDs in Alberta identify TSAs in HD patients and that a tool would be useful. These results will inform focus group discussions with RDs on TSA in HD. The online questionnaire and planned focus group results will guide adaptation of the Cancer survey into a practice tool for use with HD patients.