

Abstract Title:

Physician and nurse (PhaN) knowledge and attitudes toward enteral feeding on a general medicine ward

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Objective: To describe the attitudes and knowledge of physicians and nurses (PhaN) toward enteral feeding on the general medicine wards at an acute care hospital.

Methods: An original survey was developed to assess attitudes and knowledge of PhaN toward enteral feeding on the general medicine wards at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, BC. The 15-item questionnaire was developed by dietitians with survey design experience, and was subject to a multi-step review process, including review by dietitians and a research statistician with a background in behavioral and attitudinal survey design, followed by a pilot test. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling. Paper and online questionnaires were self-administered over a three week period. Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results: Seventy-nine surveys were returned (28% response) and 76 analyzed. Respondents included nurses (71%, n=54/76), physicians and residents (18%, n=14/76), or medical/nursing students (11%, n=8/76). Eighty-two percent (n=62/73) of respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with three or more statements reflecting a positive attitude toward enteral feeding. Three percent (n=2/76) correctly answered five or more questions out of six on the knowledge component of the survey.

Conclusion: The results suggest PhaN on the general medicine wards at St. Paul's Hospital have a positive attitude toward enteral feeding, but limited knowledge of its basic principles. These findings are consistent with other studies that describe PhaN attitude toward, and knowledge of enteral feeding, although they are not generalizable. Further research is needed to determine how knowledge and attitude impact behaviour specific to enteral feeding

Significance to the field of Dietetics: This study contributes to the body of evidence on PhaN attitudes toward, and knowledge of enteral feeding and, its findings will be used to develop site-specific education for PhaN to improve delivery of nutrition support.