

Feeding Healthy Hearts

Evaluating the Impact of Nutrition Education in a Cardiac Rehabilitation Program

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Northern Adelaide Local Health Network provides a 6 week Cardiac Rehabilitation (CR) program, with 2 practical nutrition sessions facilitated by a Dietitian. The impact of these sessions on participants healthy eating behaviours had not been evaluated.

Aim To evaluate participants 'intention to change' across a range of healthy eating behaviours following attendance at CR nutrition sessions.

Method A new evaluation tool, "Feeding Healthy Hearts" was developed, trialled and implemented. The retrospective tool collected pre and post data across 12 statements at the end of the two week nutrition component. Responses to each statement were on a scale from 1 to 5 indicating strength of agreement with the statement. Data was analysed by t-test, with significance reported when $P < 0.05$.

Results The 2 practical nutrition sessions significantly improved 11 of the 12 statements relating to healthy eating behaviours (Table 1).

Conclusion The nutrition component of CR had a positive impact on participants' intention to change eating habits, knowledge, confidence and skills in making healthy food choices. The non-significant change in statement 4 has provided impetus for improving the sessions to include additional practical activities around portion sizes and tips for reaching recommended servings of foods for heart health.

Table 1: Pre and post changes in healthy eating behaviours¹

Statement	Pre Mean	Post Mean	P Value
1. My living situation makes it difficult for me to eat healthier food everyday	3.4	4.5	<0.0001
2. I intend to eat healthier food in my meals everyday	3.3	4.6	<0.0001
3. I will eat healthier food after attending the cardiac rehab nutrition sessions	3.2	4.4	<0.0001
4. I know the portion sizes of healthier food I should be eating	2.4	2.5	N.S.
5. I am confident that I can eat healthier food everyday	3.1	4.3	<0.0001
6. I am able to eat healthier food when unhealthy foods are also offered to me	3.1	4.0	<0.0001
7. I am able to choose healthier food by reading the food labels	3.1	4.4	<0.0001
8. I am usually able to eat healthier food	3.5	4.2	<0.0001
9. People who are important to me want me to eat healthier food everyday	4.1	4.4	<0.0001
10. I feel that eating healthier food is easy	2.9	3.7	<0.0001
11. I feel that healthier food is important	3.9	4.7	<0.0001
12. I feel that eating healthier is enjoyable	3.1	4.1	<0.0001

¹91 participants completed the evaluation tool (May to Dec 2017)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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