

ASSESSMENT OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES OF MEĐIMURJE COUNTY POPULATION ON CELIAC DISEASE

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Abstract

Celiac disease or gluten-sensitive enteropathy is a chronic autoimmune disease characterized by persistent intolerance of gluten, or proteins of prolamine (gliadin, hordein, sekalina, avenin) found in wheat, barley, rye and oats. Earlier studies have shown that people are not sufficiently familiar with celiac disease. The aim of this research is to collect information about the knowledge and attitudes of the Međimurje County population on celiac disease and compare whether there are differences between male and female responses.

The survey about the knowledge and attitudes of the Međimurje County - Croatia population on celiac disease was conducted in the period from April 27 to June 21, 2017 via social network Facebook. A representative sample consists of 210 respondents (22 male and 188 female), all of whom participated voluntarily and anonymously, fulfilling a customized 22 question questionnaire. The first four questions relate to the socio-demographic data, i.e. gender, education and the area of residence in Međimurje County and the other 18 to the knowledge of celiac disease. The results obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics

The results have shown that residents of Međimurje County, regardless of gender are well informed about the illness itself. They are aware that celiac disease is incurable illness that affects people of all ages and that the basic treatment consists of a life-long gluten-free diet that requires the release of gluten found in wheat, barley, rye and oats. However, it is noticed the lack of information in more detailed issues.

Considering that the most of respondents were women we cannot conclude with certainty about differences in responses among gender but the differences are small. The most obvious difference is that 4 respondents who suffer from celiac disease and 16 respondents who have a family with a celiac disease, are female. The reason for this may be a small number of male respondents but it would be great to conduct research on a larger number of male respondents to see if the reason is something completely different.

Key words: Celiac disease, Gluten-free diet, Gluten, Knowledge, Attitudes.