

PATIENTS' DIETS IN LATVIAN PSYCHO-NEUROLOGICAL HOSPITALS

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Abstract

The role of nutrition in the treatment of diseases is known, and it can be a contributing and hindering factor which can shorten or prolong the time of treatment. Studies on mental health have shown that the inclusion of certain nutrient in increased amounts in patients' diet can have a positive effect on the treatment of depression, anxiety etc. The COVID-19 pandemic increases the risk of depression in general population, which means an increased number of patients in need of professional help. Therefore, the aim of the study was to evaluate the patients' diets in Latvian psycho-neurological hospitals, emphasizing the provision of certain nutrients which are essential for mental health.

There were analyzed a one-week menu at three Latvian psycho-neurological hospitals. Provision of nutrients (minerals, vitamins, fatty acids) in patients' diets was calculated using Finish food composition database. Basic conditions for provision of patients' diet are determined by the regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers, indicating the daily variety of energy value, minimum and maximum amount of proteins, fats and carbohydrates. The obtained results regarding patients' diets were processed using MS Excel and SPSS Statistics 22.

The required amount of nutrients per day can be achieved with a variety of foods which in turn can significantly affect the concentration of minerals and vitamins and profile of fatty acids in the diet. In general, the provision of minerals and vitamins in hospitals' diets was close to the recommendations of a healthy person, but it was not sufficient for psycho-neurological hospital patients. It would be desirable to raise their concentration by increasing the amount of vegetables and fruits in the diet. Analysis of fatty acid profile in patients' diets showed significant differences depending on whether fish or meat products were included. It would be advisable to increase the concentration of omega-3 fatty acids.

In general, the nutrition provision for patients of psycho-neurological hospitals could be assessed as sufficient, but several aspects need to be improved. Vitamin D intake should be significantly increased as it didn't reach the generally recommended dose. Fruit should be included and the amount of vegetables should be increased to provide a recommendation of at least 400 g per day, which in turn will increase the intake of vitamins and minerals.

Key words: *Minerals, Vitamins, Fatty acids, Patients' diet, Psycho-neurological hospital.*