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Abstract Title:

Knowledge of Health Professionals Regarding Vegetarian Diets from Pregnancy to Adolescence: An Observational Study

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Abstract (not more than 300 words)
The number of people adopting vegetarian diets is constantly increasing, and many among them are young parents who decide to share their diet with their children. The aim of this study was to investigate health professionals' knowledge regarding the adoption of vegetarian diets from pregnancy to adolescence. A cross-sectional survey was conducted. The administered questionnaire, which was based on the recommendations of the most up-to-date guidelines, included two macro areas: The first investigated the sociodemographic and professional profile of the interviewees and the second addressed the knowledge of the participants regarding vegetarian diets. A total of 418 health professionals in Italy were interviewed, of whom 65.8% were nursing staff. Among the participants, 79.9% had not attended a nutrition course in the previous five years. A correct definition of a vegetarian/vegan diet was provided by 34.1% of the participants. The answers regarding knowledge of nutrients were correct in 20% of cases, whereas correct answers to questions assessing knowledge of the risk and benefits of a vegetarian diet and the adoption of a vegetarian diet throughout the life cycle were given by 45% and 39.4% of the participants, respectively. A significant correlation between the items of the second macro area that investigated the knowledge and dietary habits of the participants was found for seven items. The results of the study indicate that health professionals do not have complete and exhaustive knowledge about vegetarian diets and lack information on health outcomes and the adoption of a vegetarian diet throughout the different life cycles and nutrients. Improving pre- and in-service learning opportunities in vegetarian nutrition for health professionals is strongly advisable.

Keywords
Vegetarian diet; health professional knowledge; health professional attitude

Professional Biography (100-150 words)

Dr. Maria ENRICA Bettinelli attended University of Milan School of Medicine where she graduated with her M.D. in 1986. She completed her Residency in Pediatrics in 1989 and in Neonatology in 1991 at University of Milan and went on to complete her medical experience at Mangiagalli Hospital in Milan. Dr. Bettinelli obtained her MSc in Perinatal Mental Health

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