

Background

Nutrition literacy is a unique subset of health literacy, a leading predictor of poor health outcomes₁. Understanding a patient's nutrition literacy may help dietitians provide interventions tailored to a patient's nutrition knowledge weaknesses. While tools exist to evaluate nutrition literacy, it is unclear whether dietitians currently assess patients for nutrition literacy.

Objectives

To examine nutrition literacy assessment among practicing outpatient dietitians, barriers to implementing a nutrition literacy survey into clinical practice, and possible solutions to these barriers from both a dietitian and clinic manager perspective.

Methods

Recruitment: Outpatient dietitians (n=28) were recruited via convenience/snowball sampling and dietitian listservs. Dietitians were broken into four sampling frames (Fig. 1) Outpatient clinic managers (n=7) were recruited via convenience sampling.

Data Collection: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants. Examples of questions used are displayed in Table 1.

Data Analysis: All interviews were coded via grounded theory constant comparison technique₂. Themes and subthemes were influenced by interview answers.

1. Health literacy: report of the Council on Scientific Affairs. Ad Hoc Committee on Health Literacy for the Council on Scientific Affairs, American Medical Association. *Jama* 1999;281(6):552-7.

2. Glaser BG, Strauss A. *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company;1967.

Fig. 1: Sampling Frames for Outpatient RD Interviews

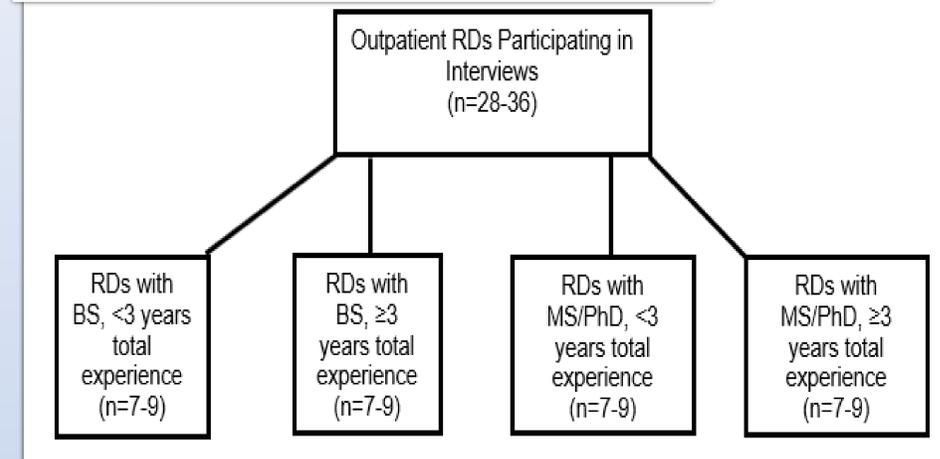


Table 1: Interview Questions

- Describe the typical work flow in your clinic.
- What is the typical visit like for your patients?
- Would there be time in your work flow for a 25 minute assessment?
- Would there be any barriers in your clinic to implementing a nutrition literacy assessment tool?
- If so, what would some of those barriers be?
- How does you assess for health literacy and nutrition literacy in your clinic?
- What types of standardized assessments do you use to assess for health and nutrition literacy?
- How do you modify educations for low-literacy individuals?
- Describe current standard-of-care educations for your clients.

Results

No dietitians (n=28) used objective tools to measure nutrition literacy; all use subjective methods. Barriers to implementing an objective tool for assessing nutrition literacy and possible solution to barriers are displayed in Fig. 2 and 3

Fig. 2

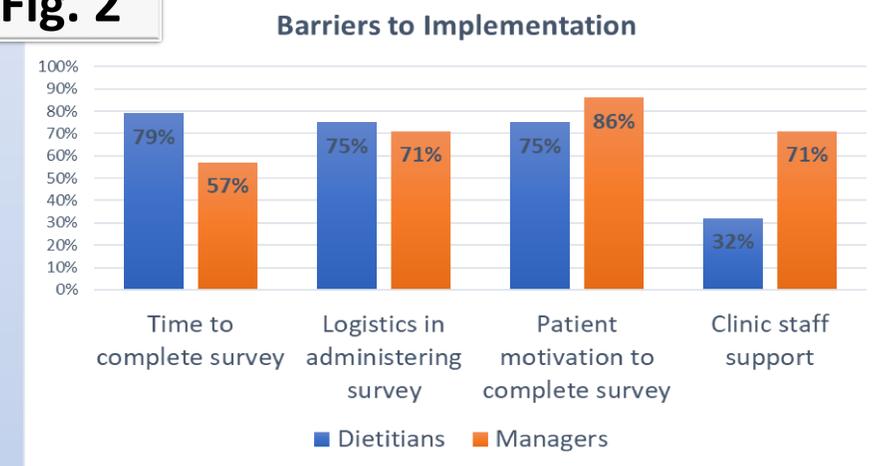
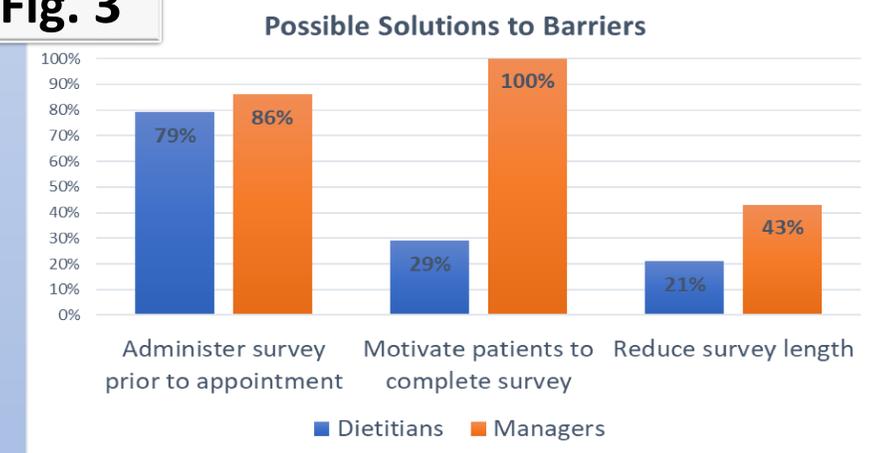


Fig. 3



Conclusions

Interviewed dietitians do not use validated tools to assess for nutrition literacy. While barriers to implementing a new nutrition literacy survey exist, solutions to these barriers may make implementation possible.