Invited Speaker Abstract

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Title
Breaking Boundaries in Primary Care: the Patients' Perspective

Abstract

In the Netherlands access to the dietitian is easy and most times fully reimbursed. Such access provides a real benefit for a patient's health. The treatment of diabetes mellitus type II is a good example of collaboration between the general practitioner and the dietician: preferably the patient is treated with lifestyle intervention and a healthy diet.

Despite this good access there is still a lot of work to be done. Doctors often lack nutritional knowledge and thus keep underestimating the importance of nutrition for health. New developments include more time for education about nutrition in the medical curriculum and spreading the word by patients themselves about the benefits of an altered diet for them.

A beautiful example is the increasing interest for blenderized tube feeding, tube feeding with blendered normal, healthy food. About a couple of years ago pediatricians and dietitians were almost all against this way of tube feeding, fearing deficits in nutrients and fearing obstruction of the tube. Many parents have shown the extreme benefits of this way of feeding their child: less vomiting, better stools, a better growth and happier children. This kind of knowledge has to find its way to the primary care of course.

Key references
Coad J et al. Blended foods for tube-fed children: a safe and realistic option? A rapid review of the evidence. Arch Dis Child. 2017 Mar;102(3):274-278. doi: 10.1136/archdischild-2016-311030

Key messages

1. Easy access to the dietitian for patients is absolutely essential.
2. Health care professionals must be educated better about the importance of a healthy diet in relation to several diseases.
3. Listen to the patients'/parents' own experiences and wishes to integrate complex dietary advice in a family setting.