

ASSESSMENT AND COMPARISON OF KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION ON PREBIOTIC AND PROBIOTIC FOODS AMONG DIETITIANS AND STUDENTS PURSUING NUTRITION COURSE.

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: *Studies have proven that prebiotics and probiotics helped in prevention and treatment of several conditions. It is important to know that a nutrition professional should have proper knowledge on nutraceuticals and nutritional properties, types of probiotic species, application of specific strains, dosage, safety, shelf life and the emerging ingredients and products containing them. Lack of awareness and poor knowledge will lead to misguiding the patients.*

OBJECTIVE: *To compare the association/relation between the knowledge, attitude, perception and overall KAP scores on probiotics and prebiotics with the years of experience, qualification, and practice (dietary consumption of these foods on regular basis) among the working and student category.*

RESULTS: *Through this online survey conducted among dieticians of various field and students pursuing nutrition it was seen that, there was significant difference in the level of perception among the two groups, with a mean perception score (13.97 ± 3.501) of the working categories which was found to be significantly greater ($p= 0.000$) than the mean perception score (12.38 ± 3.583) of the students. When assessed the overall knowledge, attitude and perception (KAP) score it was seen that the mean KAP score (82.29 ± 7.681) of the working categories was found to be significantly greater ($p=0.000$) than the mean KAP score (79.68 ± 7.683) of the student indicating that the working category had better perception and overall KAP score about probiotics and prebiotics. A significant association was found between highest qualification and perception ($\chi^2 = 25.137, p = 0.014$). The relationship on how the number of years of experience influences knowledge, attitude, perception and the overall knowledge, attitude and perception score was also tested. It was found that the knowledge and attitude scores did not show any significant relationship. But with perception score it showed a positive weak correlation at 1% level. Same way it showed a positive weak correlation at 5% level with the overall knowledge, attitude, and perception scores*

CONCLUSION: *In this study it can concluded that the working and student category had a fair knowledge and attitude towards probiotics and prebiotics, but the working category showed a significant positive perception as compared to the student category. It was also found that as the qualification and the year of working experience increases the perception towards recommending probiotics and prebiotics also increases.*

Keywords: *PROBIOTICS, PREBIOTICS, FUNCTIONAL FOODS, MICROBIOTA, DIETITIANS*