



UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICABILITY OF EATING BEHAVIOR IN THE PRACTICE OF NUTRITIONISTS

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INTRODUCTION

Eating Behavior characterizes how people eat and how behavioral responses associated with eating interfere with quality of life. Knowledge and application of this topic in clinical practice are essential for effective nutritional interventions (Cunha et al. 2022, Research, Society and Development). This study aimed to identify the application of Eating Behavior variables by nutritionists.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Descriptive, cross-sectional, quantitative study. It was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Sergipe (Opinion No. 3,677,482). It was conducted with clinical and/or outpatient nutritionists invited via Regional Nutrition Councils and social networks. Data was collected through a semi-structured questionnaire (Survey Monkey®), addressing the professional profile, understanding of Eating Behavior, and the variables contemplated in nutritional conduct. The descriptive statistical analysis applied frequencies and measures of central tendency and dispersion, as performed in SPSS 21.

RESULTS

The survey involved 128 nutritionists, of whom 95.3% (122) recognize the importance of eating behavior and its variables (biological, psychological, social, economic, and cultural) for nutritional conduct. Approximately 88% (113) agree

that nutritionists should consider as many variables of eating behavior as possible, the main ones being psychological, social, and economic. However, only 20 of the 30 attitudes toward the nutritional conduct of professionals proposed in the instrument obtained a percentage higher than 50%. Of these, eight contemplate psychological aspects, six biological, and six social. These results show a discrepancy between the importance attributed to the variables of eating behavior and their application in professional practice. The difficulties reported in the performance included patient adherence, media influence, and professional training. The advantages mentioned were the more flexible approach, greater empathy, and strengthened professional-patient bond.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite nutritionists' knowledge of Eating Behavior, difficulties can be identified in applying the techniques in clinical practice, requiring greater inclusion of the topic in training, with a focus on integration between professional and patient for effective changes in eating habits.

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