TAP HERE TO RETURN TO **KIOSK MENU**

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Introduction

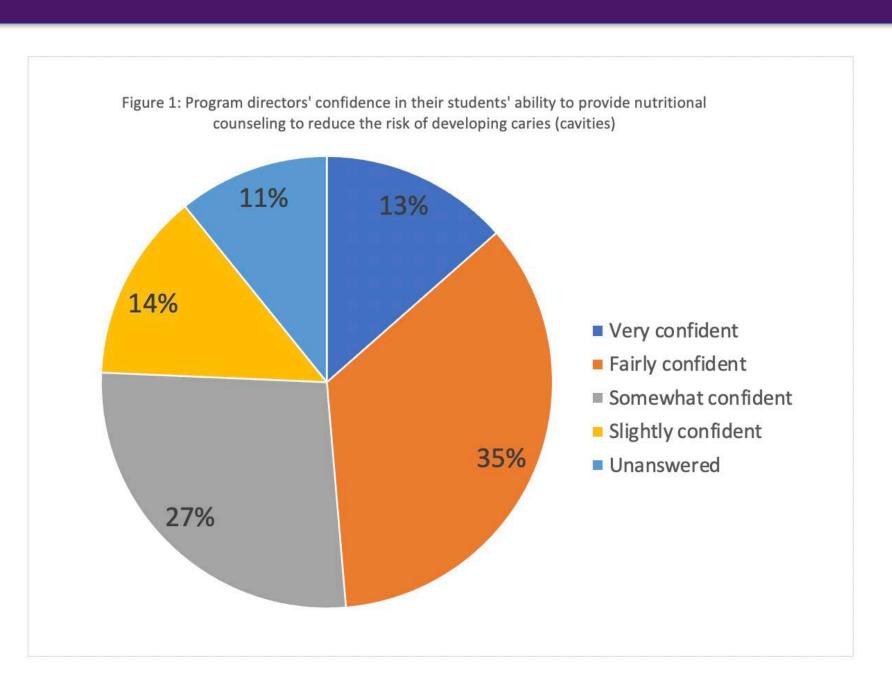
There is little to no literature regarding the inclusion of oral health education in dietetic internship programs, despite the known connection between nutrition and oral health. Collaborations between Registered Dietitians (RDs) and dental professionals remain limited which may be due to a gap in oral heath content and clinical experience during dietetic internship programs. Without oral health training during their education, Registered Dietitians (RDs) may feel they don't have the knowledge and confidence to work with dental professionals or provide oral health-focused nutrition-counseling. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the extent of oral health education and oral-health focused rotations in Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) dietetic internship programs with a masters degree. The objective was to assess dietetic internship director's oral health knowledge, attitudes towards providing oral health knowledge, and perceived barriers of oral health integration into nutrition programs.



Methods

A qualitative survey was sent to directors of an ACEND accredited dietetic internship program that offer a masters degree. The survey assess the demographics of the dietetic internship, the background of the internship director, and current practices of oral health integration within the internship and the possible factors such as attitudes and experiences towards this integration. Data was analyzed using chi square tests.

Results



Forty-seven out of 150 responses were received with a 31% response rate. Within the 47 responses, 37 met the requirements for the study. Dietetic internships with an affiliated dental school did not have an impact on a directors confidence in their students ability to provide nutrition counseling related to oral health. All internship directors who completed the survey reported teaching various topics about oral health, but it differed by the amount, location, who taught these topics and barriers to integration. While not statistically significant, program directors reported being 'fairly confident' in their students' ability to provide counseling in oral health despite the limited amount of training both inside and outside the classroom.

Conclusions

Dietetic internships having an affiliated dental school did not have an impact an internship director's confidence in their students' ability to provide counseling as it relates to oral health. Our research highlighted specific oral health topics that are being provided during didactic training for dietetic interns and found that, while also not statistically significant, the inclusion of certain topics did not have an impact on a director's confidence in their student counseling skills. This conclusion emphasizes the needs for standardized oral health topics in dietetic internships to provide all dietetic interns a baseline understanding of nutrition and oral health as well more research needs to be done to see if director's confidence correlates to an intern's confidence and practical integration into patient care.

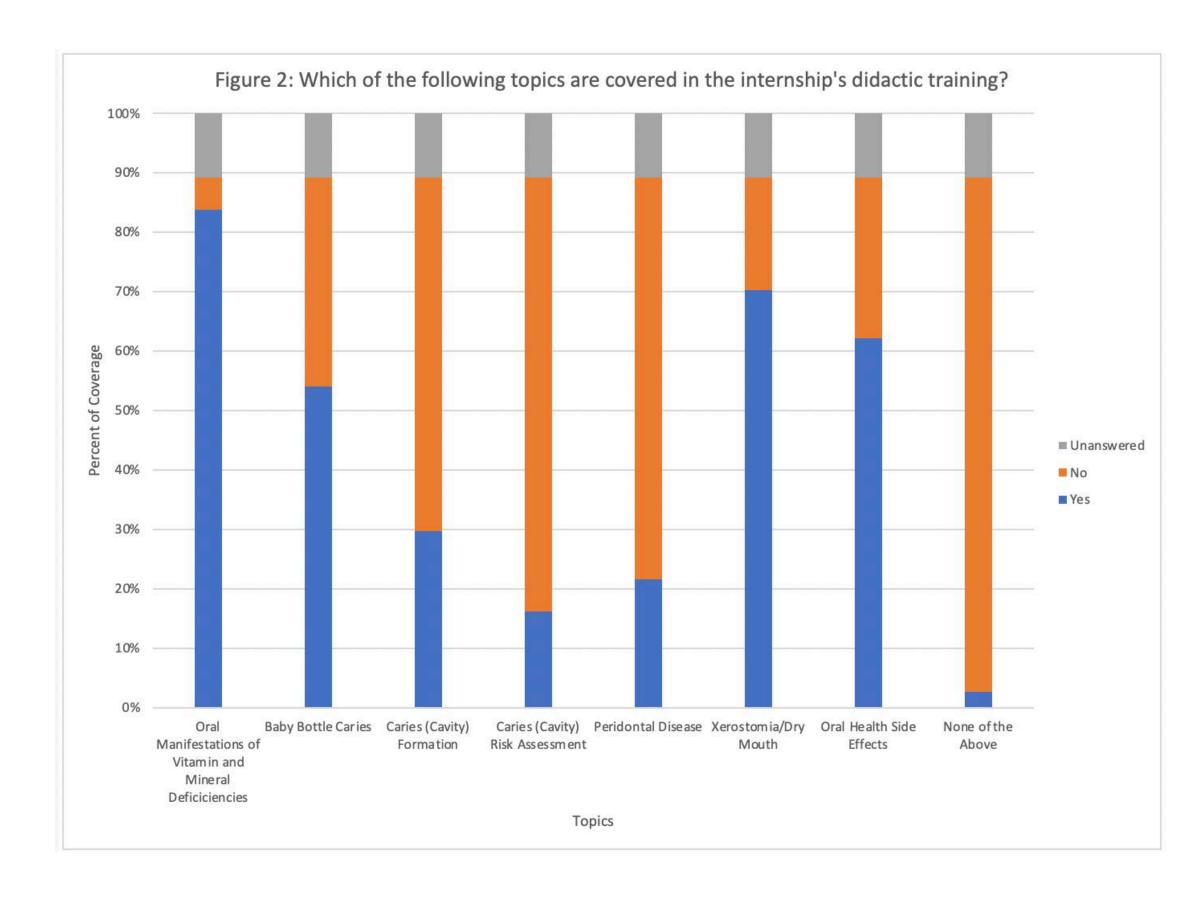


Figure 2: Oral Health related topics covered during internship's didactic training

References

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