Proposal of a new education system for the PKU diet

Mannhardt SM¹, Fekete A², Hedrich-Ellerbrok M³, Rocker S³, Rohde C⁴, Bollhalder-Wäckerli S⁵, Gebauer C⁶, Kiener C⁷, Knafl B⁸, van Teeffelen A⁹
¹Mannhardt Coaching; ²Div Metab Dis, Univ Child Hosp, Vienna, Austria; ³Univ Child Hosp Hamburg-Eppendorf, Germany; ⁴Univ Child Hosp Leipzig, Germany; ⁵Univ Hosp Zürich, Switzerland; ⁶Univ Child Hosp Berlin, Germany; ⁷Nutricia GmbH, Heilbronn, Germany; ⁸Univ Child Hosp Graz, Austria; ⁹Pediatr Dept, Univ Klinikum Münster, Germany

Background
Joyful and healthy eating is not in the focus in dietary treatment of PKU but rather the controlled intake of natural protein or phenylalanine. This is a burden on the families and the social life of the patients. Even relaxed diets due to increased phenylalanine tolerance or concomitant sapropterin therapy are still complex. A working group of German, Austrian and Swiss Dieticians has been developing a new patient education system for strict and relaxed PKU diet.

Aims for education and coaching of the patient

Healthy eating

The pyramid system emphasizes analogies to recommendations for healthy children. The dietitian specifies the pyramid for each patient (no matter whether on a strict or relaxed diet) by advising on individual allowances.

How does it work in daily practice?
During the conversation with the dietician, the patient indicates with cards of foods what he is typically eating during a day. Subsequently, the patient puts the cards on the pyramid and can easily find out whether he is eating the “right things in the right amounts”.

Satisfaction with the new education system
During the workshop the group members rated their satisfaction with the system and estimated the patients’ satisfaction. Formal evaluation for the satisfaction of patients is underway.

The dieticians’ experience with the new education system
During the workshop the group members stated that they
• need to listen to the patient more carefully
• need to watch attentively what he is doing
• need to “take themselves back”
• have less power or control but keep track easily
• share a common experience with the patient as basis for relationship
• can propose a system aimed at the patient’s benefit (his self-control)

The new education tool is
- easy to understand and use
- basis for trustful relationship between patients & dieticians
- highly accepted by dieticians and patients
- The system was yet successfully applied in two metabolic centres. Further evaluation is ongoing.

The table shows the satisfaction of dieticians with the use of the pyramid system before and after the workshop.

<table>
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<th>Evaluation during the workshop</th>
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<th>after</th>
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<td>7.8</td>
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<td>Didactic instruments</td>
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<td>Own methodical competence</td>
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<td>time for the patient</td>
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<td>Patient’s satisfaction with own</td>
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<td>Relationship with dietician</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1- very low 10 – very high