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Diverticular disease and diet: are we doing enough?

Fatima Jamshad, Rena Al-Zubaidy,
Rizwan Ahmed, Tarun Singhal

Kings College Trust, Department of Colorectal Surgery, Princess Royal University Hospital, Orpington, UK

Background: Diverticular disease (DD) is a major burden on healthcare systems globally, especially in the western world. DD accounts for the second most common indication for elective colorectal resections, with each resection costing the National Health Service (NHS) a minimum of £5,000. Since dietary advice is an integral part of the management of DD, we aim to investigate the proportion of patients that receive documented dietary advice or guidance on their stay in hospital.

Methods: A list of all admissions related to DD from June to November 2019 was obtained from the Hospital Inpatient Enquiry (HIPE) Department in Princess Royal University Hospital. Our Electronic patient record system was used to extract information regarding patient demographics, length of stay in hospital and the presence of documented evidence that dietary advice was given to patients.

Results: A total of 57 patients were admitted due to DD over a 6-month period in 2019. Forty-one were female and 16 were male. They had a mean age of 67.1 and an average length of stay of 6.3 days. Of the 57 patients, 12 (21%) had some form of surgery either as an emergency or electively after discharge. Only 15 (26%) received either dietary advice of which only 9 were referred to a dietician.

Conclusions: DD is a major contributor to surgical

admissions requiring both elective and emergency surgery. It is largely a preventable disease, hence health care staff should take more initiative to highlight the importance of lifestyle modification to patients whenever the opportunity arises, with the target to benefit public health and free healthcare resources.

Keywords: Diverticular disease (DD); diet; surgical admissions

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Footnote

Conflicts of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Ethical Statement: The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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