



An Evaluation of the Impact of Dietetic Involvement in Cardiac Rehabilitation



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Background

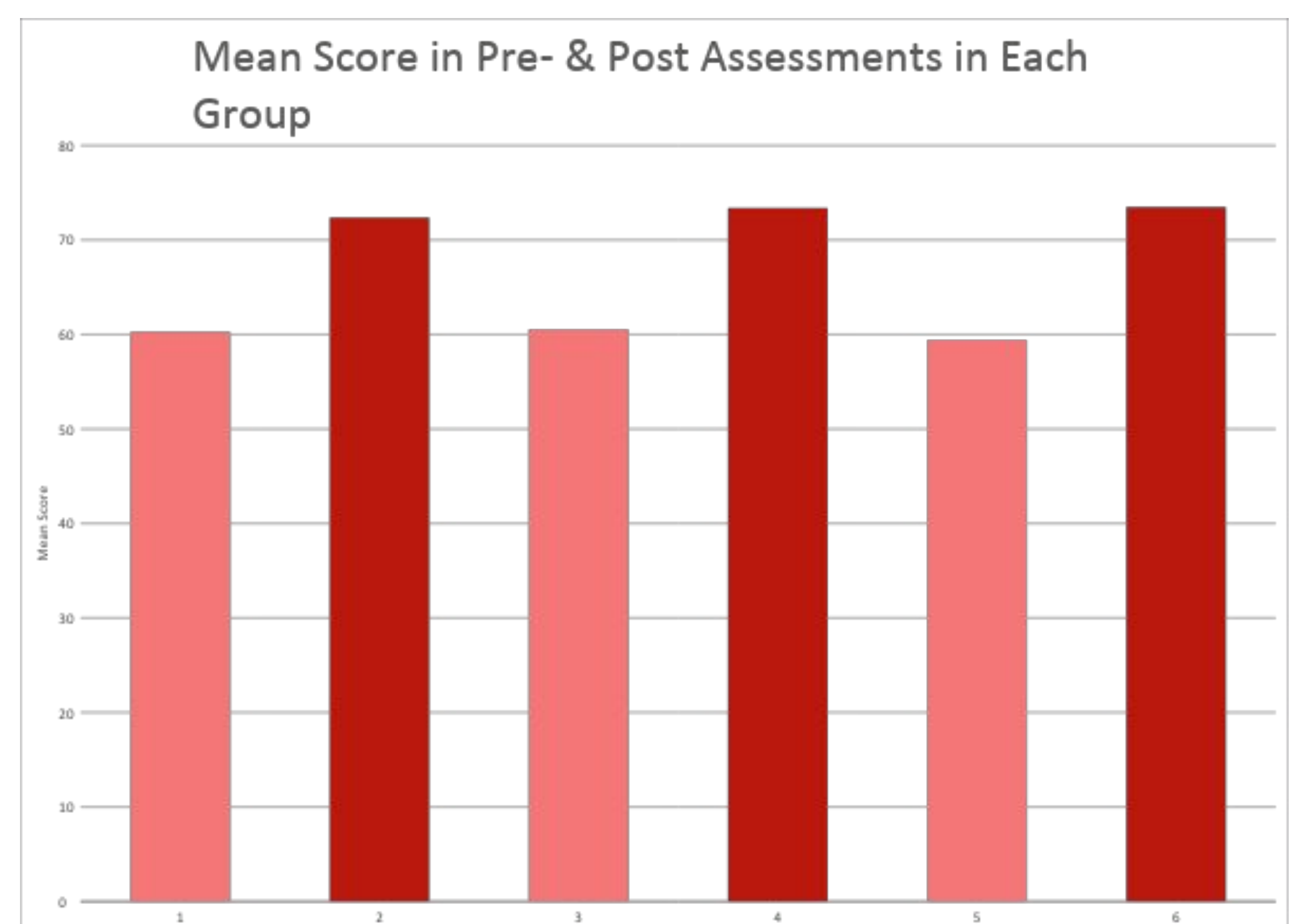
- Diet is a major modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease (CVD)¹. This supports the implementation of nutrition education in health promotion initiatives
- A 2024 report by the National Heart Programme reported that dietetic involvement in cardiac rehabilitation (CR) is inconsistent due to staffing shortages²
- Our aim was to evaluate the impact of dietetic involvement on patients in cardiac rehabilitation

Methods

- A nutritional assessment tool was developed for the CR programme in CHB
- The questionnaire consisted of 19 questions and was based on the Irish healthy eating guidelines³. Patients were scored out of 100
- All patients received a nutritional assessment with the dietitian and then a one-hour group nutrition education session.
- At the end of the programme, a final assessment was completed

Results

- Of the 84 patients included, 68 completed both the pre- and post-programme nutritional assessments.
- The mean pre-assessment score was 60.0 ± 12.7 (range 26–87) and mean post-assessment score was 73.4 ± 12.2 (range 38-93).
- A paired t-test showed a significant improvement in scores ($t(67) = 10.89$, $p < 0.001$).
- A key reason for introducing a new assessment was patient feedback on the Mediterranean Diet Score⁴.
- All patients agreed that the questions asked during the assessment would provide an accurate reflection of their diet.
- The assessment tool also provided a better understanding of the patients' current diets and helped identify the most common issues
- Increased dietetic involvement also prevented some patients from adhering to overly restrictive diets due to limited knowledge or misinformation.



Conclusion

- The significant improvement in patients' diet demonstrates the influence of nutrition education on diet quality and highlights the benefit of increased dietetic involvement in CR.

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2. An Overview of Cardiac Rehabilitation Services in Ireland [Internet]. 2024. Available from: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/an-overview-of-cardiac-rehabilitation-services-in-ireland.pdf>

3. FSAI. Scientific Recommendations for Healthy Eating Guidelines in Ireland [Internet]. 2011. Available from: https://www.fsai.ie/getmedia/26b9d220-237e-4b2e-b7defa0dbcf2a664/healthy_eating_guidelines_report_2011.pdf?ext=.pdf

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