AUDIT OF THE NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN ATTENDING COMMUNITY DISABILITY NETWORK TEAMS IN DUBLIN NORTH WEST AND NORTH INNER CITY.'

T O'RIORDAN, ***CLINICIAL SPECIALIST DIETITIAN, COMMUNITY DISABILITY NETWORK TEAMS FINGLAS AND NORTH INNER CITY DUBLIN, HSE INTEGRATED HEALTH AREA, DUBLIN NORTH CITY AND WEST***

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that people with disabilities are at high risk nutritionally. This may be related to their medical condition, sensory sensitivities, difficulty swallowing, poor oral motor skills or gastrointestinal diseases. All of which may affect a persons ability to eat or drink sufficient nutrition and thus negatively affect growth and development.

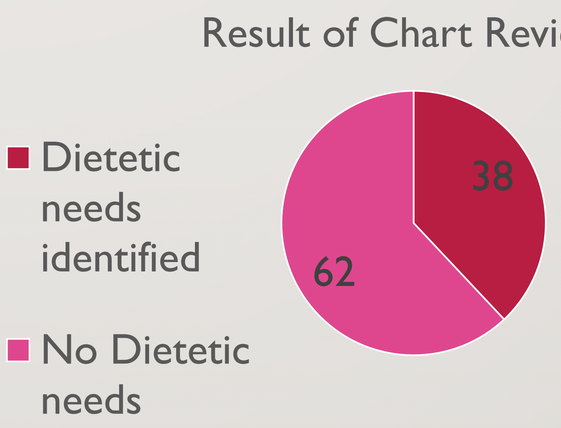
AIMS

- **TO ASSESS AND IDENTIFY THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH DIETETIC NEEDS ACROSS TWO DISABILITY NETWORK TEAMS.**
- **TO COMPILE A CASELOAD FOR A NEW DIETETIC SERVICE.**
- **TO PRIORITIZE FOR THE SERVICE BASED ON DIETETIC NEEDS.**

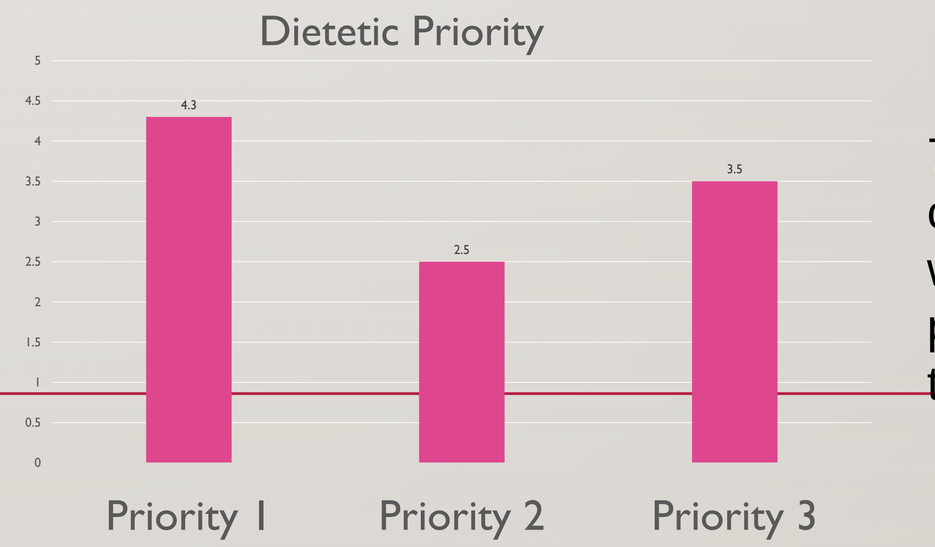
METHODS

- 100 randomly selected files audited across two disability network teams.
- Each e-file was reviewed, and screened to determine if the child at the time of review had any identified dietetic needs.
- This included information or reference to the child being overweight, underweight, specific nutritional deficiencies, oral nutrition supplements, enteral tube feeding, constipation or diarrhoea linked to dietary causes. This also included any known medical conditions that require dietary advice such as diabetes, coeliac disease, Crohn's disease, food allergies.

RESULTS



Almost 40% of children attending community disability services required dietetic assessment



70% of children were high priority for the service

CONCLUSION

The findings from this audit (38%) are similar to what other countries have found whereby 47-53% of those living with a disability require dietetic services. This cohort often consume inadequate diets and are often so restrictive that they present with significant nutrient deficiencies. Both under nutrition with specific nutrient deficiencies and over nutrition (obesity) are most commonly cited.

It is important that people living with a disability have access to appropriate dietetic services to assess, advice and provide nutritional interventions to children to ensure adequate growth potential and prevent nutritional deficiencies.

REFERENCES

Rotenberg S, Chen S, Hunt X, et al. Are children with disabilities more likely to be malnourished than children without disabilities? Evidence from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys in 30 countries. BMJ Nutrition, Prevention & Health 2024;0:e000779. doi:10.1136/ bmjnph-2023-000779