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Nutritional genomics and Turkish dietitians' practice

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Although nutritional genomics gives dietitians the opportunity to redefine their roles in the health care community, little is known about dietitians' approach to the topic. The study aimed to describe Turkish dietitians' knowledge, involvement and confidence in nutritional genomics.

A piloted questionnaire was emailed to a sample of 1126 registered dietitians of the Turkish Dietetics Association with a 12% response rate (n 135). The knowledge was measured using 17 multiple choice questions relating to general nutrition, genetics and nutritional genomics; the involvement in 11 activities was measured using the frequencies in practice; and the confidence in six activities were measured by Likert scales.

A median knowledge score of 42% indicated low levels of knowledge in nutritional genomics. The nutritional genomics knowledge was positively correlated with general nutrition knowledge ($P = 0.003$). The median confidence score in six activities and the median involvement score in 11 activities relating to genetics and nutritional genomics were found to be 30.5% and 27%, respectively. The confidence levels in many activities were positively correlated with the knowledge ($P < 0.05$). A majority of the participants stated that they believe in the importance of nutritional genomics for dietetics counselling and wanted to attend further education programmes (respectively, 89% and 94% of the study population).

Most dietitians have limited knowledge and experience with nutritional genomics and are not confident in their ability to apply the topic. A critical need for genetics and nutritional genomics education of dietitians has been identified in this study.