

Dietitian-led webinars: A positive impact on patient symptoms, knowledge and behaviour.



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INTRODUCTION

Coeliac disease is managed by following a gluten free diet, which is recognised to be challenging¹. Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) can be managed by dietary modifications incorporating a reduced FODMAP diet with individualised reintroduction². Dietetic support is crucial in enabling people to consume a nutritionally adequate and minimally restrictive therapeutic diet. The clinical need for these conditions is often greater than the dietetic time available³.

The NHS long-term plan encourages the use of digital technology to provide convenient methods for patients to access support and advice⁴. Offering patients access to timely and reliable information was a key motivator for developing dietitian-led webinars since 2017.

STUDY AIM: To evaluate the impact of dietitian-led pre-recorded webinars.

METHODS

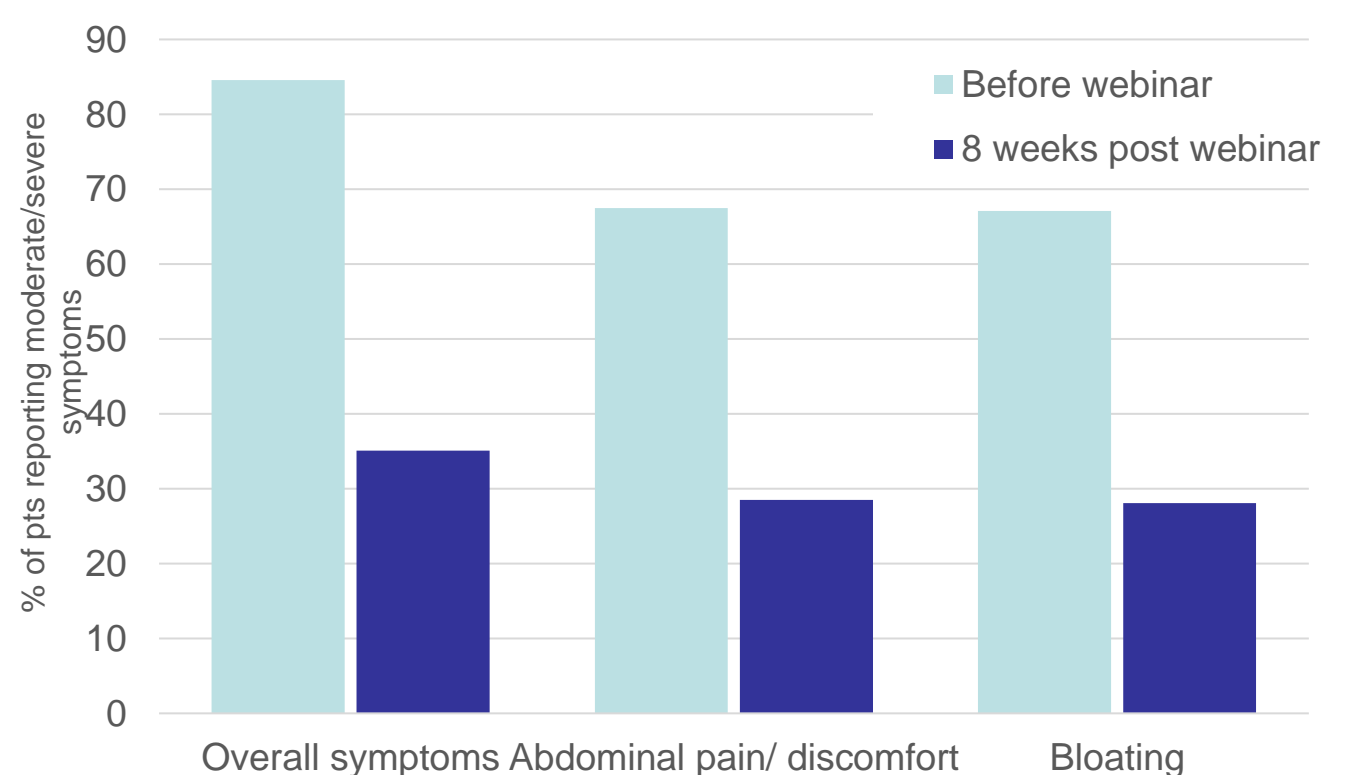
A service evaluation was undertaken for the 'The Low FODMAP Diet' webinar for patients with IBS, with data collection from October 2020 to March 2022 (n=228). Patients with IBS accessing the webinar were invited to complete a pre and 8 weeks post-webinar questionnaire (inclusive of the Gastrointestinal Symptom Rating Scale (GSRs) and a global symptom question).

Data presented from the 'Newly Diagnosed Coeliac Disease' webinar from March – August 2022 (n=21), data collection is ongoing. Patients newly diagnosed with coeliac disease accessing the webinar were invited to complete a pre and 4 weeks post-webinar questionnaire (inclusive of dietary knowledge⁵ and behaviour questions).

Data paired for pre and post webinar statistical analysis.

RESULTS

For persons with IBS, the proportion reporting moderate/severe gastrointestinal symptoms significantly reduced from 85% pre 'Low FODMAP diet' webinar to 35% 8 weeks post webinar (p<0.01). Pre webinar only 17% of persons with IBS reported satisfactory relief from symptoms, whilst post webinar this increased to 53% (p<0.01).



In response to "What action would you take if the webinar was not available?" 32% would request an appointment with a dietitian and 25% with a GP or consultant.

Gluten free dietary knowledge score significantly improved 4 weeks post watching the 'Newly diagnosed with coeliac disease' webinar compared with pre webinar scores (8.8±2.4 versus 10.2±2.3; p<0.05).

Persons with coeliac disease reported they were more likely to avoid cross-contamination within the home environment and more likely to ask other people who are preparing food for their consumption after viewing the webinar (p<0.05).

CONCLUSION: The dietitian-led webinars offer clear clinical benefits, giving clinicians the confidence to include them into patient pathways. Further benefits include dietitians being able to focus on utilising their specialist skills (and finite time) where it is most needed and patients have timely access to reliable online resources.

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