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Healthcare workers and their role in nutritional intervention: exploring the tactics of tailoring and inventiveness in the eThekwini District

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ABSTRACT

This research report explores health care workers' implementation of nutrition intervention strategies in daily practice, examining how the limiting realities of the field prompt tailoring of advice based on patient-to-patient variation. Nutritional and epidemiological shifts have added to a quadruple burden of disease in South Africa and have dictated national and provincial frameworks to include dietary guidance for patients. As custodians of these policy shifts, health care workers are faced with the challenge of offering dietary guidance amid a social context that drastically delimits patients' uptake of these prescriptions. This research report explores how health care workers navigate nutrition and health challenges in their own social and personal lives and how this influences their nutritional guidance to patients. Through semi-structured interviews in the eThekwini District of Durban, healthcare workers have been found to inventively tailor nutrition advice based on the context they practice in and influence by personal experiences. The research aims to deepen and complicate understanding of nutrition intervention in healthcare settings while also considering the healthcare worker's perspective as key in implementing and maintaining the local and global challenge of malnutrition and diet-related non-communicable diseases.

Key words: Healthcare workers, nutrition intervention, eThekwini District