

## FRI-419

### Is a lack of patient awareness holding back self-management of NAFLD?

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**Background and aims:** Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) affects 25% of the UK population and is a frequent manifestation of the metabolic syndrome (MetS). Lifestyle change can ameliorate the negative impact of NAFLD/MetS on long-term health, but requires patient engagement. Lack of NAFLD/MetS awareness in patients may act as a barrier to making healthy lifestyle choices. A questionnaire was developed to explore knowledge of NAFLD in our local population.

**Method:** Questionnaires were distributed at random to 100 patients attending various medical specialty outpatient clinics over a 12 week period. Questions explored understanding of causes and management of NAFLD.

**Results:** Respondents were 47 % (n = 47) female; 52 % (n = 52) male; 1 % (n = 1) other; Age ranged from < 21 years (11%; n = 11); 21- 40 years (24%; n = 24); 41-60 years (39%; n = 39); > 60 years (26%; n = 26). Ethnic origin and educational achievement were representative of the local population: Most respondents had at least one self-reported risk factor for NAFLD/MetS: obesity (30 %; n = 30); fatigue (30 %; n = 30); hypertension (19 %; n = 19); dyslipidaemia (15 %; n = 15); depression (14 %; n = 14); Type 2 diabetes (13 %; n = 13); low exercise levels (12 %; n = 12); high fat/processed diet (11 %; n = 11).

39% (n = 39) of patients had heard of NAFLD. 7% (n = 7) self-reported having NAFLD and 6% (n = 6) knew someone with NAFLD lower than expected prevalence suggesting a lack of awareness. Overall awareness of NAFLD was poor; only 80% (n = 80) thought NAFLD could be harmful and 43% (n = 43) did not know that it could cause cirrhosis. Only 39% (n = 39) knew NAFLD is preventable, with no significant difference in knowledge between those with and without NAFLD (p = 0.49). Once established, 21%; (n = 21) thought NAFLD was irreversible.

Understanding the impact of lifestyle on NAFLD was limited. Only 25% (n = 25) correctly identified a target of 5-10 % total body weight loss. Just over half (n = 54) recognised the Mediterranean diet as a suitable dietary strategy. 21% (n = 21) incorrectly stated that rapid weight loss would be appropriate.

**Conclusion:** Despite high self-reported incidence of MetS risk factors, surprisingly few respondents had, or were aware of someone with NAFLD. Awareness of the impact and management of NAFLD was poor in people with and without NAFLD. Greater public education on NAFLD prevention and management by healthy lifestyle change is critical to long term reduction of prevalence and progression of NAFLD.