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INTRODUCTION

Food and eating can be a source of pleasure, means of social interaction and peer acceptance. Having Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) may alter these psychosocial factors because of painful or embarrassing symptoms and/or undernutrition resulting in activity limitation. However little is currently known about the impact of IBD on the psychosocial factors of food and quality of life.

AIMS

This study aimed to determine patients' experiences of the social and psychological impacts of food on people with IBD.

METHODS

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 28 patients regarding their experiences of food and eating in relation to their IBD. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Concepts were labelled through line by line coding using a constant comparative approach based on grounded theory.

RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease Type</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Age (Mean, SD)</th>
<th>Years since diagnosis (Mean, SD)</th>
<th>Surgery (%)</th>
<th>Active disease (%)</th>
<th>BMI (Mean, SD)</th>
<th>MUST score Low (%)</th>
<th>Medium (%)</th>
<th>High (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crohn's Disease</td>
<td>43.75%</td>
<td>37.59 (12.06)</td>
<td>10.34 (10.86)</td>
<td>43.75%</td>
<td>56.25%</td>
<td>23.33 (5.58)</td>
<td>63.63%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulcerative Colitis</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>37.26 (12.48)</td>
<td>10.41 (10.80)</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23.22 (5.67)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planning & effort

So much planning [around eating] and sometimes I think about it, I try not to think about it really, it does my head in. I don’t want to be like this, I hate being like this... I do get depressed about it.

Planning & effort

Just have to think - is the short term really going to be worth what happens afterwards?

Eating out

I mean colleagues sometimes go out and they invite me and I do find excuses. I'd like to go but then it's just too messy.

Missing out

I suppose the biggest problem is missing out on certain things I used to really enjoy beforehand. And now either second guessing or ruling them out altogether.

Frustration

I do miss just thinking “Oh that looks really nice, I’ll have that”, or at least not worrying about what I’m eating.

Unpredictability

I suppose the biggest problem is missing out on certain things I used to really enjoy beforehand. And now either second guessing or ruling them out altogether.

Frustration

I would say I’m about 80-85% strict because sometimes I just can’t... be very strict with myself and as I’m getting older I’m getting worse at being strict!

Planning & effort

I was told it would be trial and error. That’s what was always said to me in terms of what food I could eat and not eat.

Planning & effort

So much planning [around eating] and sometimes I think about it, I try not to think about it really, it does my head in. I don’t want to be like this, I hate being like this... I do get depressed about it.

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Frustration

It does vary on a day to day basis and that’s probably the hardest part as well, because there are times you know there are certain things that are going to cause a reaction... it’s all a learning process.

CONCLUSION

Eating and drinking is a significant challenge for many IBD patients, particularly during flare; however CD patients appear to have more sustained eating issues during remission.

Cognitive and emotional factors such planning meals, eating being an extra consideration and frustration around missing out and unpredictability impact on quality of life and enjoyment of eating, especially away from home.

Acknowledging difficulties around eating and drinking could improve quality of life and adjustment to IBD.