

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The importance of adherence to dietary and lifestyle changes for gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is well known. The question is whether patients of gastroenterology clinics are well informed about these interventions.

**Aims:** The main aim of the work was to investigate the level of awareness of patients about dietary and lifestyle changes for GERD using knowledge questions. The secondary goals were to find out where the patients most often acquire their current information about dietary and lifestyle changes and what the patients would like to be more educated about.

**Methods:** Data were obtained using a questionnaire from 33 respondents from gastroenterology departments. Data collection took place in the Faculty Polyclinic of the General University Hospital in Prague, in the Fourth Department of Internal medicine of the General University Hospital in Prague and The Military University Hospital in Prague. The obtained informations were analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

**Results:** The research revealed that the average awareness score based on the evaluation of the knowledge questions in the questionnaire was 71 %. The average number of wrong answers per 1 respondent was 7 out of a total of 24 possible correct answers. The most common source from which patients have information about dietary and lifestyle changes has become the doctor, as reported by 79 % of patients. However, the majority of patients (73 %) also stated that they searched for information on the internet. The areas in which patients want to be more informed are in particular the various treatment options for GERD (61 % of patients) as well as specific dietary and lifestyle changes (36 % of patients).

**Conclusion:** Patients with GERD are relatively well informed about dietary and lifestyle changes, but the majority of respondents reported that they had searched for some information about these interventions on the internet and also had better mean information scores (75 %) than those who did not search for information on the internet (62 %). At the same time, only 25 % of patients looking for information on the internet had an average information score higher than 90 %. The majority of respondents (64 %) indicated that they did not need to be more informed about dietary and lifestyle changes, but their mean awareness score was 69 %. For these reasons, it would be advisable to create a leaflet for patients that would contain scientifically proven informations about dietary and lifestyle changes, so that patients do not have to search for this informations on the internet, where they can come across a lot of misleading claims. The leaflet could be complex and cover multiple areas of the GERD issue, particularly the different treatment options that the patient sample wanted to know about the most. Information about dietary changes could be provided by a nutritional therapist, which would be particularly beneficial for overweight patients.

**Keywords:** gastroesophageal reflux, GERD, knowledge, dietary changes, lifestyle changes