

The Eating at Treatment (EAT) Questionnaire: A Tool to Assess Habits Related to Patients Eating at Dialysis

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Introduction

- Within the US, the policies at dialysis facilities differ as to whether patients are permitted to eat while being treated on dialysis.
- The Eating At Treatment (EAT) questionnaire was developed as a tool to assess possible differences between eating and drinking habits of patients on days they received dialysis treatment vs. non-treatment days and to monitor kcal and protein intake while at dialysis.

Objective

The EAT pilot program was designed to determine whether educating patients and allowing them to eat during dialysis would reduce the number of missed meals on dialysis days and potentially improve nutritional status.

Methods

- Seven Registered Dietitians (RDs) administered the EAT questionnaire to 61 patients.
- The EAT questionnaire consisted of the following questions:
- 1. Thinking back on the last week:
- How many times did you usually eat on dialysis days (consider all meals and snacks)?
- How did the amount of food you ate on dialysis differ from what you ate on non-dialysis days? (More; Less; No Difference)
- 2. Do you usually eat while at the dialysis center either before, during or after dialysis? Yes / No
- If yes, then please indicate whether it is usually:
- Before dialysis (at the center)
- During dialysis (during treatment)
- After dialysis (at the center)
- 3. Do you know of kidney-friendly foods that you could bring to eat at dialysis?
- 4. If you do not eat before, during, or after dialysis, then what are the reasons you do not eat?
- Not permitted
- Not hungry
- Have had a bad experience
- Do not plan ahead
- Don't know what to eat
- Other
- 5. If you do eat before, during or after dialysis, then what do you normally eat at treatment?

Results

- Patients ate fewer meals and snacks on dialysis days (Figure 1).
- The majority of eating at the dialysis facility occurred while the patient was on dialysis (Figure 2).
- If the patients who ate at the dialysis facility, 86% reported that they ate during treatment as opposed to before or after treatment.
- Of the patients who did not eat at the dialysis facility, the most common reported reasons were:
- 63% were not hungry (Figure 3)
- 20% reported an adverse event (eg., stomach pain; risk of diarrhea, hypotension)

Figure 1: Differences in Food Intake on Dialysis vs. Non-Dialysis Days

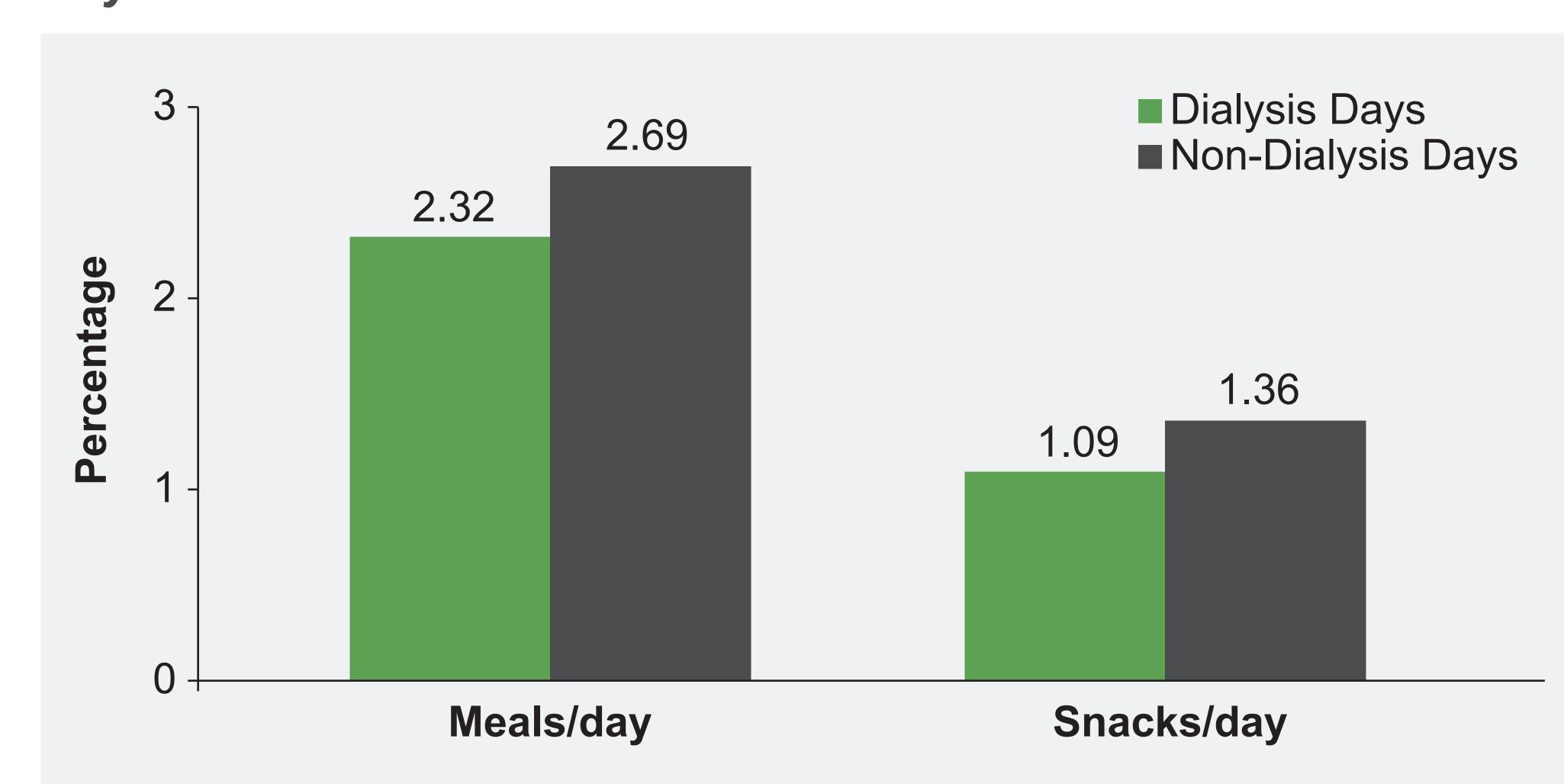


Figure 2: If You Do Eat at the Dialysis Facility, When Do You Eat?

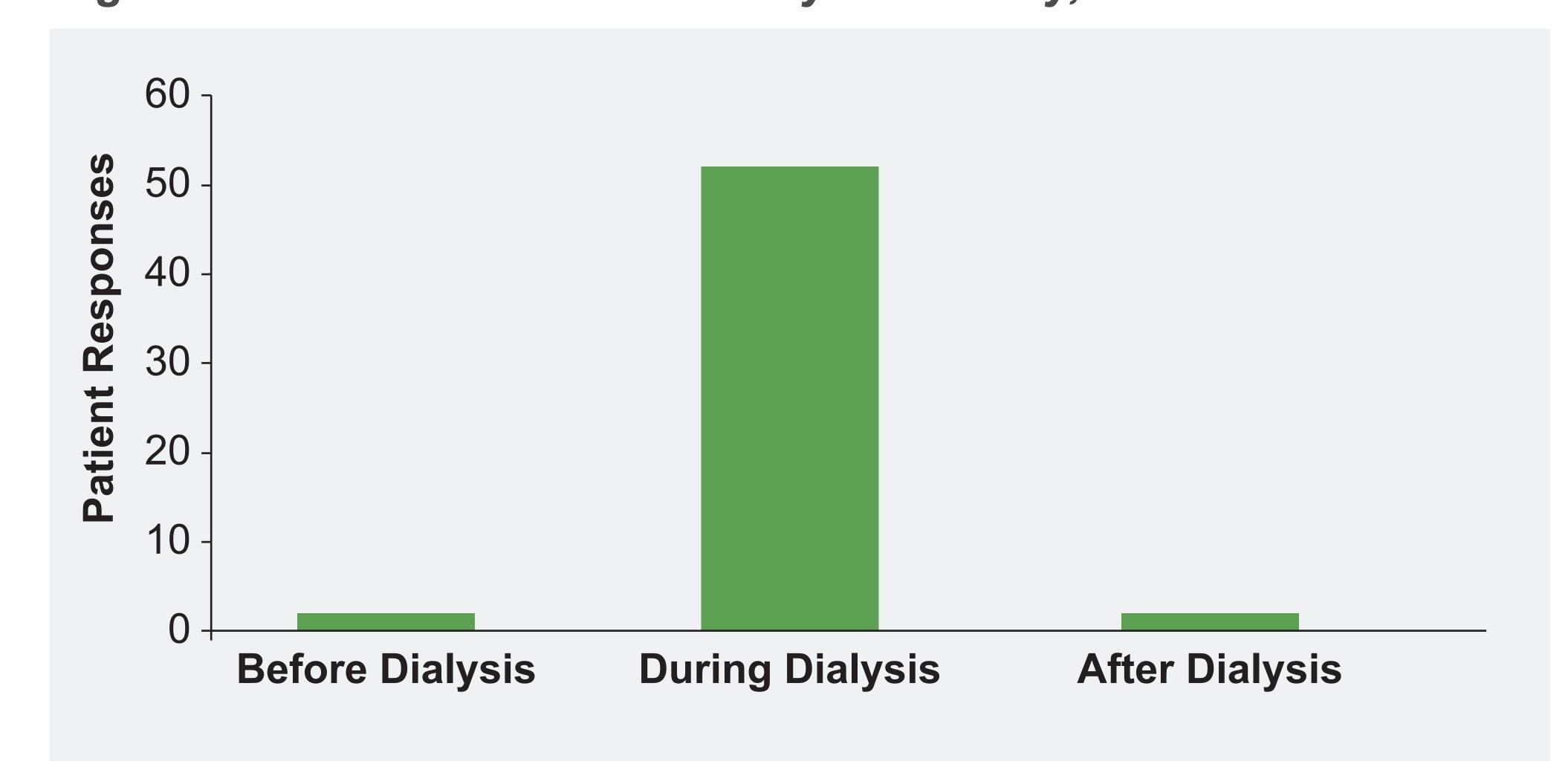
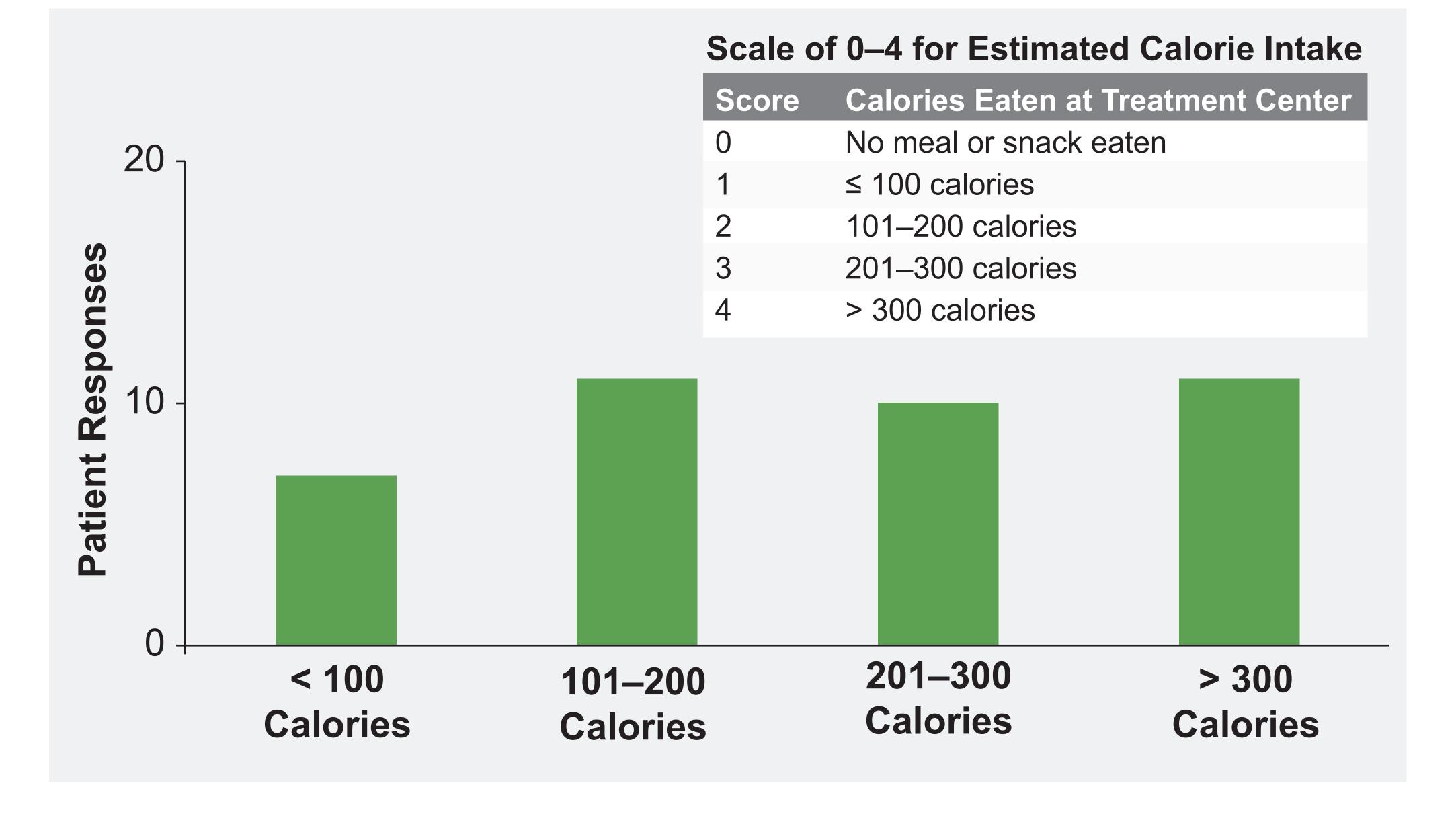


Figure 3: If You Do Not Eat at the Dialysis Facility, Then Why?

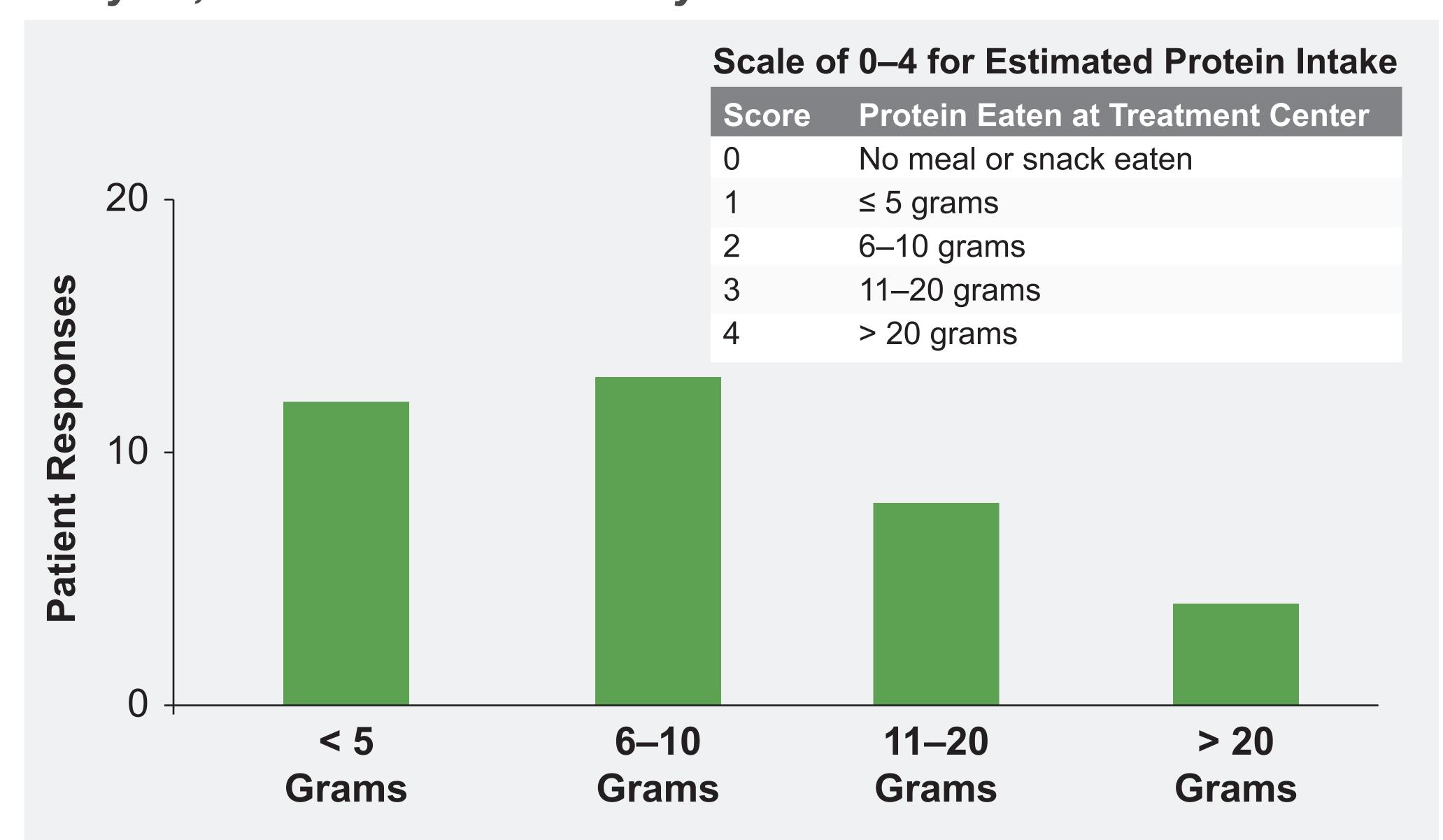


Figure 4: Caloric Intake: If You Do Eat Before, During, or After Dialysis, What Do You Normally Eat at Treatment?



- Reported dietary intake from 37 patients who ate during dialysis was scored by RDs for protein and kcal content.
- Adequate intake was set at > 200 kcal for calorie intake and > 10g of protein for protein intake
- 19 (51%) patients reported adequate kcal intake (Figure 4)
- 12 (32%) patients reported adequate protein intake (Figure 5)

Figure 5: Protein Intake: If You Do Eat Before, During, or After Dialysis, What Do You Normally Eat at Treatment?



Conclusions

- Based on results obtained from this small pilot questionnaire, patients reported eating less on treatment days vs non-treatment days.
- In addition, patients who did eat during treatment reported that what they ate was low in protein.
- This questionnaire is an effective tool that is easy to administer and score (total time ~12 min/pt) for providing insight into the eating habits of patients receiving dialysis treatment.
- An opportunity exists for educating patients through nutritional counseling about increasing their protein and kcal intake on treatment days.
- Distribution of this questionnaire to a large number of dialysis patients may prove useful for reevaluating policies regarding eating at dialysis centers.

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