Abstract

Objective: To analyse the diets chosen by anorexic patients and a control group, assessing several nutritional aspects. Method: Forty-four outpatients with an initial diagnosis of restrictive anorexia nervosa (normal BMI at the time of the study) and 34 undergraduates chose their diet from a list of common foods. Nutritional content, frequency of consumption, and influence of illness and treatment duration on the diet chosen were all analysed. Results: Patients' diets had a lower caloric content (P = 0.01). Their diets were also lower in niacin (P = 0.03), vitamin B12 (P = 0.04), sodium (P = 0.003), zinc (P = 0.04), phosphorus, copper and selenium (P = 0.01). Frequency of consumption was lower among patients for bread and cereals, meat and cured meats (P = 0.01), sweet foods (P = 0.001), and fatty and fried foods (P = 0.05), but higher for vegetables (P = 0.01). Discussion: Patients tend to maintain some characteristic eating patterns and modify others, not so much in terms of therapeutic objectives but, rather, as a way of following more closely the usual eating patterns of the context.

Keywords

Diet, Anorexia nervosa, Nutrients. Micronutrients, Fat.