Abstract

Objectives: Obesity is the consequence of an imbalance between energy intake and expenditure, food intake being affected by multiple factors -psychological, social, work-related, etc. This revision discusses the role of diet in the behavioural treatment (BT) of obesity, which faces multiple approaches and focuses on patients' behaviour rather than their mere energy intake. Setting: Recent literature has been revised that deals with the health benefits of Mediterranean diet in order to assess its suitability for obesity treatment based on BT. Results: BT helps patients to develop skills and techniques in order to adopt proper habits and attain their healthiest weight. Patients learn to establish realistic goals, both as regards weight and behaviour, and to evaluate their progress in modifying eating and exercising habits. The application of the Mediterranean diet in obesity treatment presents various advantages which are based on the principles of this diet -wide variety of food, high carbohydrate content, or high satiating capacity, which prevents specific hunger and ketogenesis-, and has been demonstrated to be effective in reducing body weight. Conclusions: BT based on the Mediterranean diet is a useful tool for obesity treatment. The Mediterranean diet provides the patients with a diet established on widely recognised nutritional benefits, suitable to their social and daily life, and that can be easily followed in the long term, according to the objectives of BT. For these reasons, Mediterranean diet-based BT helps to prolong both the treatment and maintenance periods and therefore contributes to a more stable weight loss.

Keywords

Mediterranean diet, Obesity treatment, Cognitive behavioural therapy, Group therapy.