

# PATIENTS' KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS OF GERD

Authors: Student Ieva Stainytė,  
Student Neringa Umaraitė,  
Scientific advisor Jaunė Ieva Lukošienė, MD

## INTRODUCTION

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is among the most common gastrointestinal disorders. Risk factors associated with GERD can be categorised into non-modifiable (e.g. age, sex, ethnicity) and modifiable (e.g. body weight, lifestyle and dietary habits). Lifestyle and dietary changes are commonly recommended as a first line treatment, therefore, patients' understanding of aforementioned modifiable risk factors is of particular importance.

## METHODS

The study was conducted in the Department of Gastroenterology of the Hospital of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Kaunas Clinics. It included adult patients with GERD who completed an original questionnaire on our considered modifiable risk factors for GERD, including nutrition and lifestyle aspects. Statistical analysis was performed using MS Excel and SPSS programmes. Chi-square and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were used to compare answers between respondents. Statistically significant findings were assumed with  $p < 0.05$ .

## CONCLUSIONS

Our study revealed that GERD patients' knowledge about the investigated modifiable risk factors is not comprehensive. Patients know more about the recommended diet than about lifestyle aspects. Evidently, more detailed counsel by the attending physician on the importance of diet and physical activity is needed.

## AIM

To evaluate GERD patients' knowledge about modifiable risk factors of GERD.

## RESULTS

The study included 70 patients: 46 (65.7%) women and 24 (34.3%) men, mean age of respondents was 45.64 (SD=13.83) years. 7 out of 10 recommended and 12 out of 17 non-recommended products were statistically significantly known in patients with GERD ( $p < 0.05$ ). Significantly more respondents (75.7%) were unaware that natural juice is recommended for patients with GERD ( $p = 0.001$ ). Even more respondents (80%) did not know that seafood should be avoided ( $p = 0.001$ ). The majority of patients were aware that lifestyle factors such as wearing tight clothing over a stomach ( $p = 0.001$ ), frequent use of NSAIDs ( $p = 0.001$ ), smoking ( $p = 0.001$ ) and lying down immediately after a meal ( $p = 0.001$ ) are not recommended, whereas frequent eating in small portions is considered to be beneficial ( $p = 0.001$ ). It has been known that lifestyle and dietary changes should be applied in conjunction with medication ( $p = 0.017$ ). Furthermore, significantly more participants did not know that physical activity 1 hour after a meal is not recommended ( $p = 0.001$ ). Also, respondents were not aware that abdominal obesity has negative impact on GERD ( $p = 0.001$ ). Patients' knowledge about diet was significantly better compared to knowledge about lifestyle recommendations ( $p = 0.001$ ). Most of the patients (65.7%) indicated that they obtained information about modifiable risk factors of GERD by searching on their own.