

Knowledge and Use of Malnutrition (Undernutrition) Screening Tools for Adults in Indiana: A Pilot Study

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Background: Malnutrition is a complex condition that remains under-recognized in adults. Screening is the first step in identifying individuals at risk of malnutrition or who are malnourished. Prompt recognition, followed by comprehensive nutritional assessment and intervention, can significantly reduce complications associated with malnutrition. Until recently, no one agreed-upon valid/reliable malnutrition screening tool was recommended for use in all adults in all care settings. The purpose of this pilot study was to examine Indiana nutrition practitioner's knowledge and use of the six malnutrition screening tools (Malnutrition Screening Tool (MST), Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST), Mini Nutritional Assessment-Short Form (MNA-SF), Short Nutritional Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ), Mini Nutritional Assessment-Short Form-Body Mass Index (MNA-SF-BMI), and Nutrition Risk Screening 2002 (NRS-2002)) identified in the August 2019 Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) as being supported by the largest number of studies in their comprehensive systematic review. AND recommended using the MST to screen all adults irrespective of age, medical history, or care setting. It is unknown if Indiana nutrition practitioners have adopted this recommendation.

Methodology: Current members (n=1356) of the Indiana Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (IAND) were invited between April-June 2021 to anonymously complete a 34-question, IRB-approved online survey. Data were collected on member demographics (professional and educational credentials, years in/current area of practice, client population), knowledge/use/confidence of the six tools, which healthcare team member completed the tool, timeline between admission, screening and comprehensive nutritional assessment (if indicated), screening score "triggering" assessment, modification of the tool, use of BMI to screen adults for malnutrition, and interest in an online educational training program.

Results: Sixty-eight IAND members (59 active, 4 retired, and 5 students) completed the survey, with 38 (55.88%) unfamiliar with AND's position on malnutrition screening and 59 (86.8%) interested in learning more about malnutrition screening tools. Sixty (88.2%) had heard of the MST, and 25 (42.4%) active and retired members responded they were very confident using it. Thirty-six (53.0%) had heard of the MNA-SF, and 13 (22.0%) active and retired members responded they were very confident using it. Less than 40% of members had heard of the MUST, SNAQ, MNA-SF-BMI, or NRS-2002, and < 14% active and retired members were very confident using them. Of the 35 active members whose care setting screened adults, 19 (54.3%) used the MST (13 (68.4%) stated a score of 2 triggered an assessment), 22 (62.9%) reported RNs and 15 (42.9%) reported RDs completed the screen, 16 (45.7%) reported screening was completed within 24-hours of admission, 22 (62.8%) were equally split reporting assessments were completed either 48 or 72-hours post-screening, 18 (64.3%) reported no modifications to the tool, and 19 (54.3%) reported using BMI to screen for malnutrition.

Conclusion: This pilot study indicates that despite a low survey response rate, the majority of IAND members who completed the survey had heard of the MST and that over half of the members who screened adults used the MST in their care setting consistent with the tool and AND's recommendation. The reported lack of confidence using the MST coupled with a majority interested in learning more about malnutrition screening creates an opportunity for developing an online educational training program for Indiana nutrition practitioners emphasizing the importance of screening all adults of all ages and in all care settings, not just acute, in our battle to overcome malnutrition.

88% had heard of the MST
42% (active/retired RD/RDNs)
were very confident using the MST
54%, whose care setting screens adults
for malnutrition, use the MST and
68% stated a score of
≥ 2 triggers an assessment

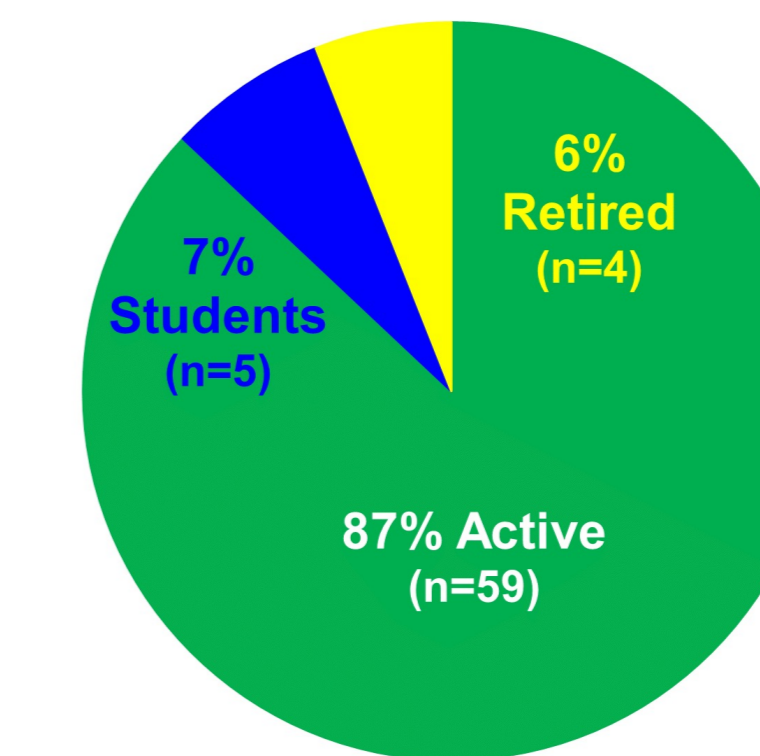
56% were unfamiliar with AND's
position on malnutrition screening
87% were interested in learning
more about malnutrition screening tools

<https://go.iu.edu/4lme>

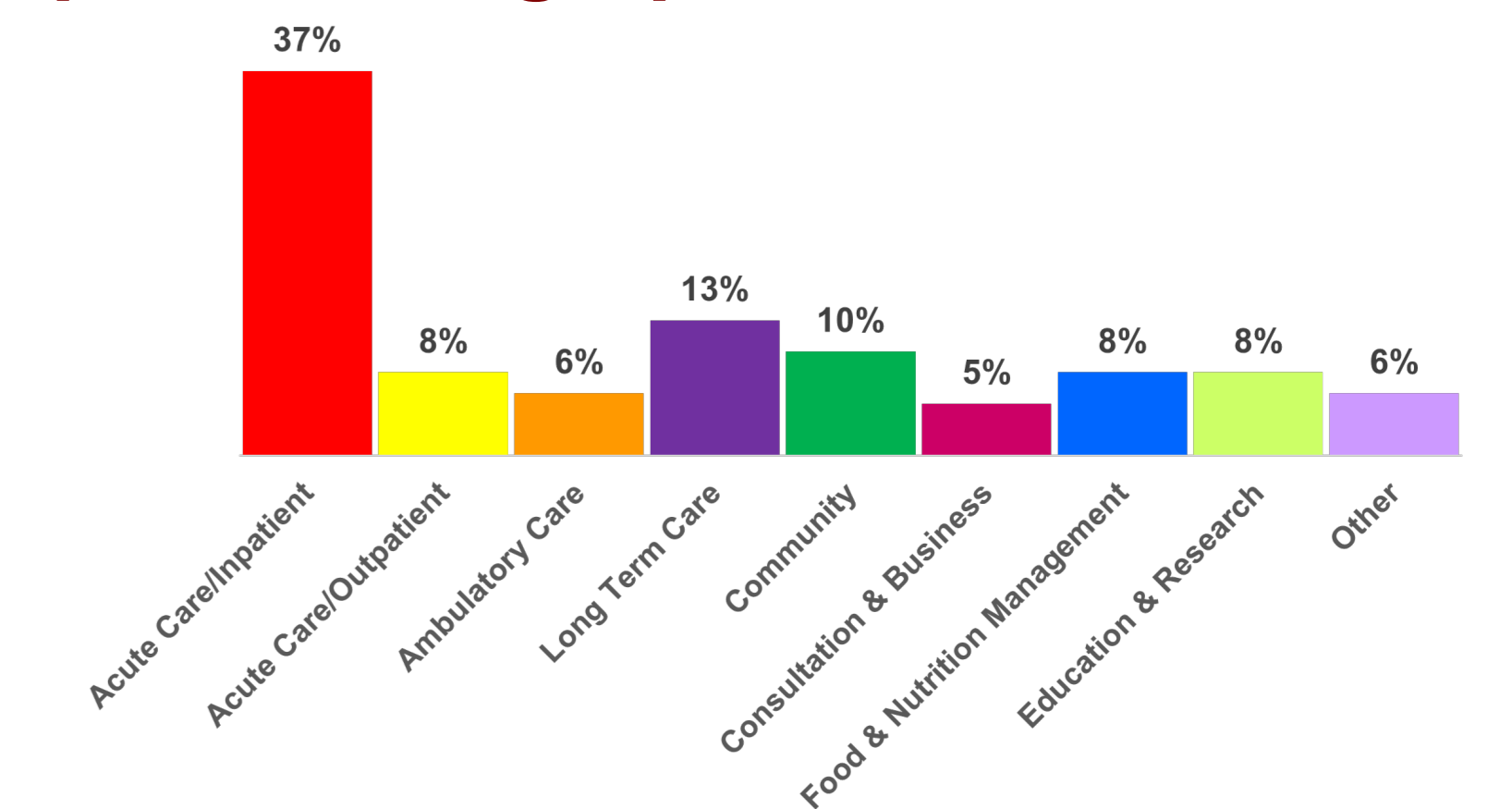


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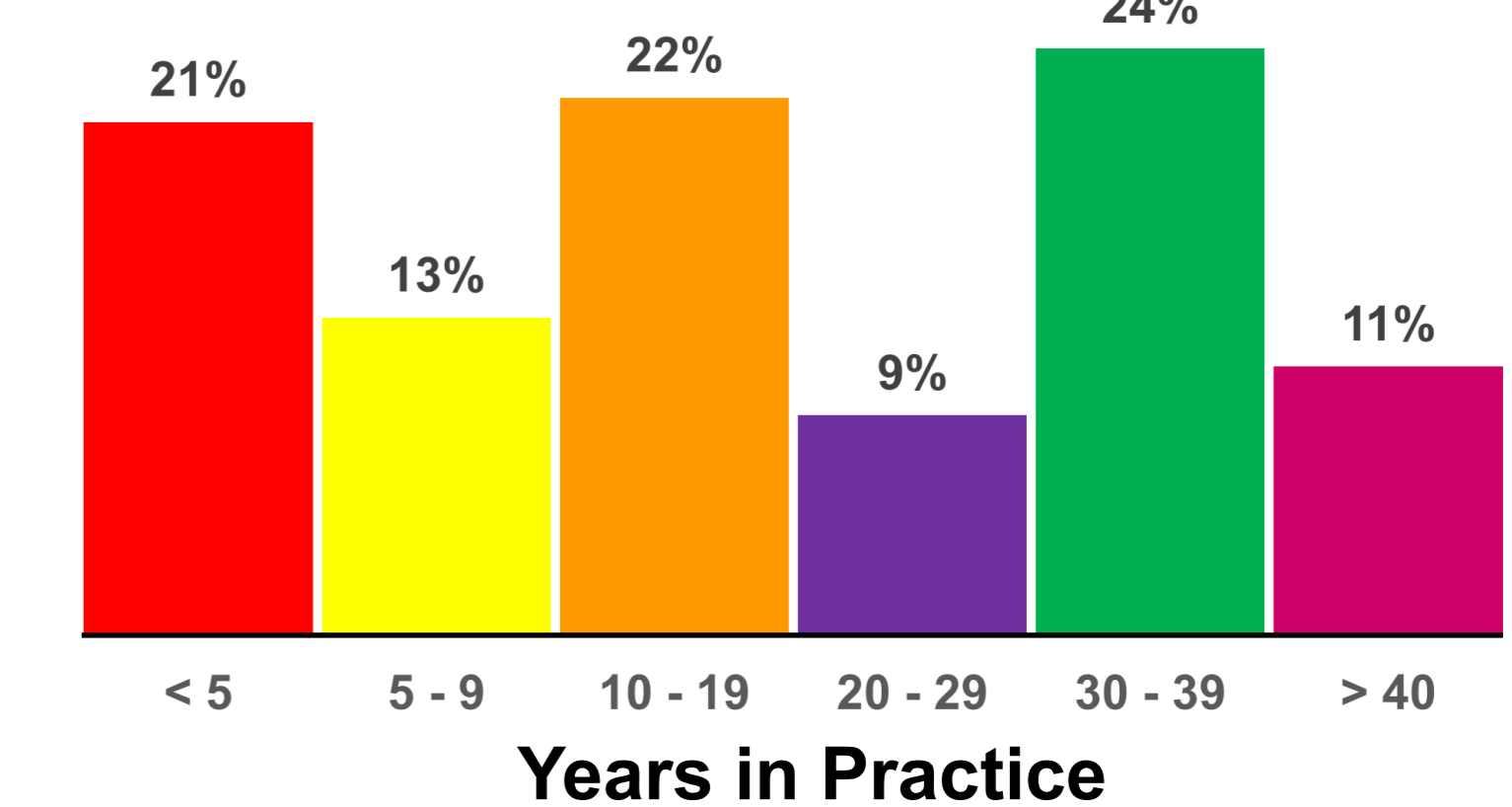
Participant Demographics



Membership Status

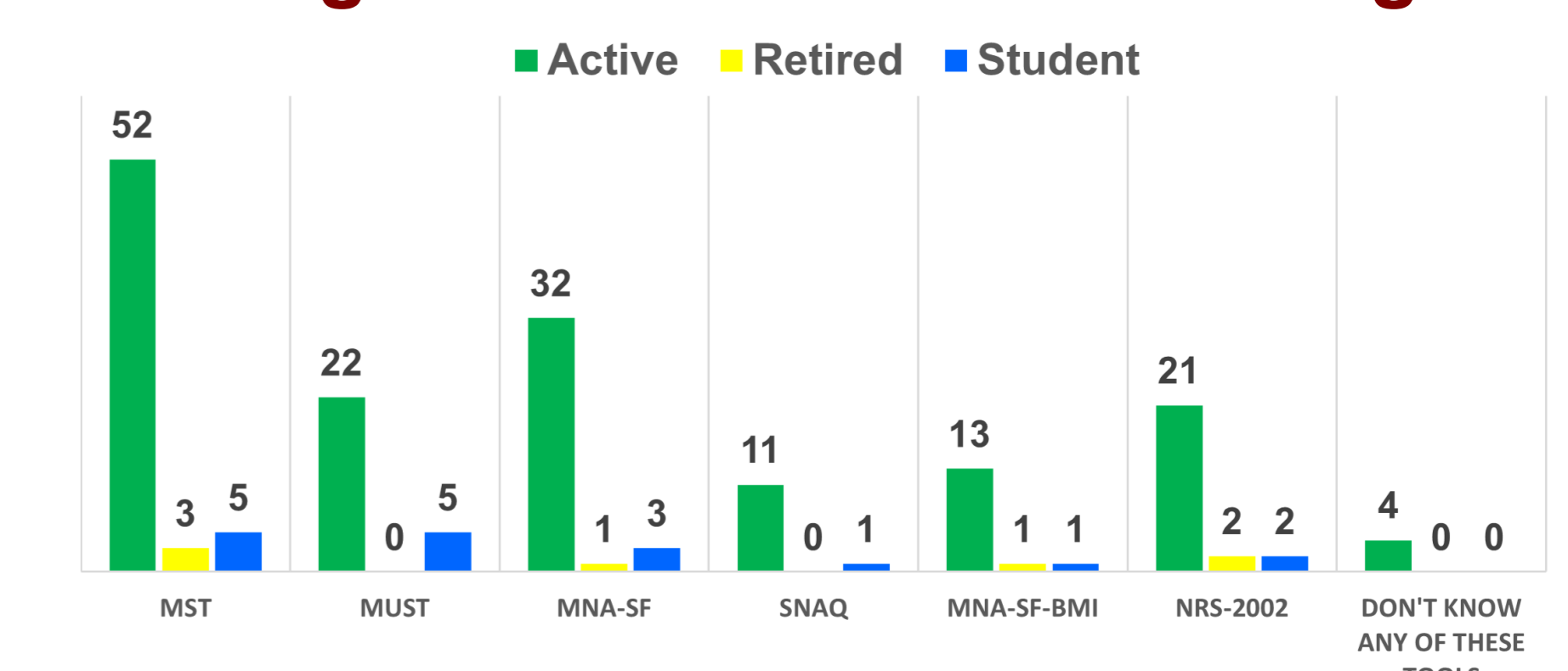


Current Area of Practice



Years in Practice

Knowledge of Malnutrition Screening Tools



Confidence Using Each Malnutrition Tool

