

Research dietitians database survey – REPORT

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September 2017

Introduction:

In 2014, EFAD's Research and Evidence Based Practice Committee (REBPC) established a database of dietitians engaged in research, at the request of European dietitians. The goals of this database are mainly to facilitate collaboration between European dietitians in research and secondly to augment the visibility of research within the profession of dietitians.

Aim:

To investigate the use and usefulness of this database within the EFAD network.

Methodology:

An online questionnaire was developed by the REBPC and distributed via the 34 NDAs that are (affiliate) member of EFAD in the summer of 2016. They were asked to disseminate the link to the survey to their members.

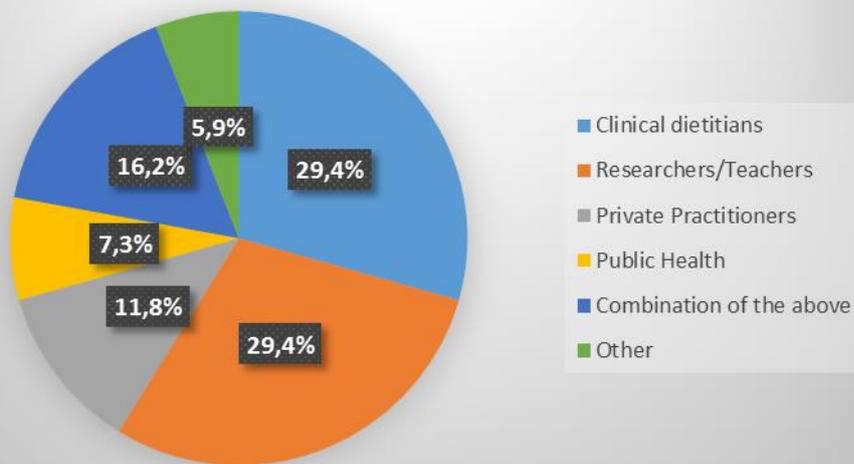
With regard to the content of the questionnaire, 5 sections can be distinguished: in the first item general information was explored, whereas the other items concerned awareness, use and usefulness of the database. Suggestions about the theme of a webinar by the REBPC was asked for closing at the end of the questionnaire (Table 1).

The analysis of data was through EXCEL.

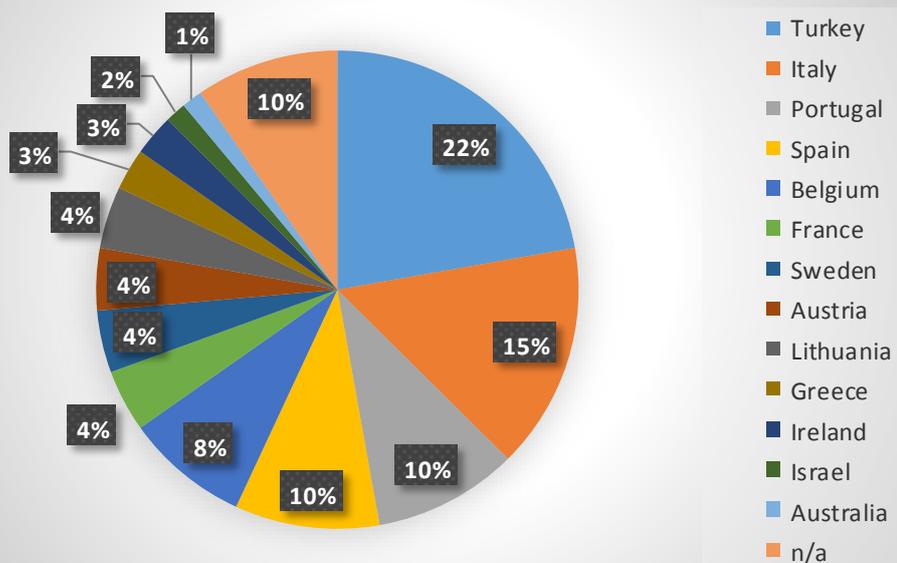
Results:

The survey sample consisted of 72 completed questionnaires. The first part of the survey refers to general information. 60 of the surveyed (83.3%) responded to the first question regarding the type of their EFAD membership. Among the respondents, 41.7% are full members, 40% are affiliated members and 18.3% are education associate members. Regarding their area of practice, 68 of the surveyed responded. Their main area of practice is shown in **Graph 1**. Areas of practice other than the ones proposed in the survey included sports nutritionist and sales representative in pharmaceutical industry or food supplement industry. Moreover, 65 (90.3%) of the surveyed declared their country of origin/residence, as shown in **Graph 2**.

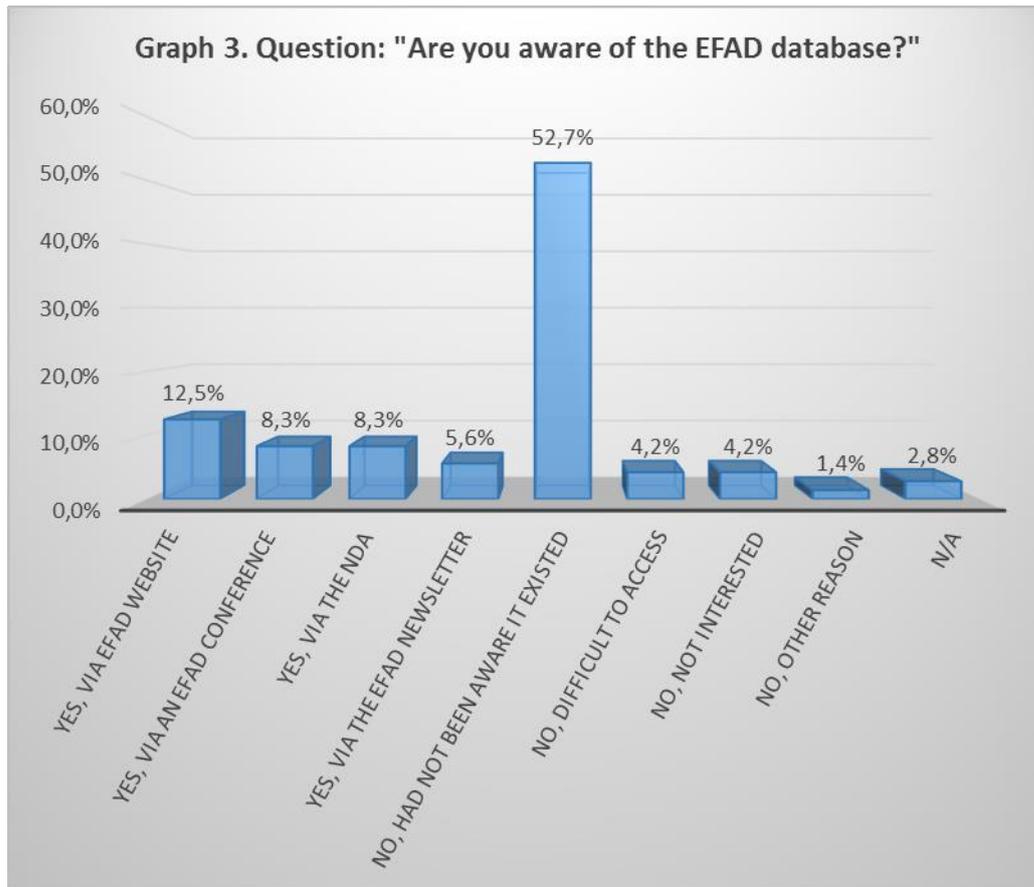
Graph 1. Main areas of practice of the respondents



Graph 2. Countries of origin of the respondents



The second part of the survey concerns the sample's awareness of the EFAD research dietitians database. When questioned whether they are aware of the database or not, 70 out of the 72 surveyed chose to respond, 25 positively (34.7%) and 45 negatively (62.5%). More specifically, the responses and relevant rates are depicted in **Graph 3**. Among those who responded that they had not been previously aware of the existence of the database, a NDA member mentioned no relevant e-mail notice ever received and among those who mentioned other reasons, the main reason was the lack of time to read relevant e-mails.



The third part of the survey is only addressed to those who responded yes in the previous part (25 of the 72 surveyed, 34.7%). Of the 25 positive respondents, 23 answered the main question of this part about ever entering the database. Among the respondents, 43.5% replied positively and 56.5% negatively. Those having entered the database reported that their aim was mainly to be able to contact other research dietitians (70%) and in a lesser extend "so that others can see it" (30%). 46.2% of the negative respondents presented as a reason that they are not research dietitians, another 46.2% other reasons (forgot to do it, not presently engaged in relevant research to enter, not aware of it) and 7.6% that the accessibility is difficult.

The fourth part of the survey refers to the usefulness of the database. 5 out of 72 responded, 4 responses were legible (1 answer did not respond to the question):

- Being able to see dietitians researching in similar areas
- Exchange links, practices
- Finding interesting and useful information
- Very useful to do a network between European dietitians

The 4a part is about some suggestions regarding the use of the database. When questioned if it could be used for contacting colleagues, of the 67 respondents in this question, 94% replied yes, 1.5% no and 4.5% ongoing. When questioned if the database could be used for starting a collaboration, among the 66 respondents, 95.5% responded yes and 4.5% ongoing. Furthermore, when questioned if it could be used for promoting the role of dietitians, of the 66 respondents in this question, 89.4% replied yes, 4.5% no and 6.1%

ongoing. Finally, 7 of the total survey sample proposed other uses, of which 1 was not an answer to the question:

- Design research studies between EU
- Education quality
- Find new jobs improving the ongoing research
- Making it available to the wider audience apart from dietitians, other AHPs and funding organisations
- Promote joint working method
- Share tools and work in collaborations

In the 4b part, the sample surveyed is asked to propose what could be changed in order to improve the usefulness of the database. 12.5% of the sample answered this question, suggesting that the below mentioned could be changed/ made:

- To send information through dietitians and ESD groups
- Raise the awareness of the existence and accessibility of the database
- Making it available to the wider audience outside of dietitians, other AHP's and funding organisations
- Some information about the database users

The final part of the survey is about suggested topics for the next webinar. Among the 63 respondents of this question, the topic they ranked first is presented in **Graph 4**. Moreover, 3 of the surveyed offered their suggestions (in addition, there was 1 response that did not answer the question):

- GRADE approach to assessing research quality
- Grant applications; funding bodies
- Statistics related to the positions dietitians are getting/ to the research articles published by dietitians



Table 1: Overview of the characteristics of the respondents and response rate per item of the questionnaire

	<u>Respondents, n (% of total survey sample n=72)</u>	<u>Respondents, n (% of those responded in each question)</u>
1.General information		
Type of EFAD membership	60 (83.3%)	60 (100%)
Full member (NDA)	25 (34.7%)	25 (41.7%)
Affiliated member (NDA)	24 (33.3%)	24 (40%)
Education Associate member (HEI)	11 (15.3%)	11 (18.3%)
Area of practice/work	68 (94.5%)	68 (100%)
Private practice	8 (11.1%)	8 (11.8%)
Food service	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Clinical dietitian	20 (27.8%)	20 (29.4%)
Public health	5 (6.9%)	5 (7.3%)
Researcher/ teacher	20 (27.8%)	20 (29.4%)
Combination of the above	11 (15.3%)	11 (16.2%)
Other	4 (5.6%)	4 (5.9%)
Country	65 (90.3%)	65 (100%)
France	3 (4.2%)	3 (4.6%)
Portugal	7 (9.7%)	7 (10.8%)
Turkey	16 (22.2%)	16 (24.6%)
Belgium	6 (8.3%)	6 (9.3%)
Greece	2 (2.8%)	2 (3.1%)
Spain	7 (9.7%)	7 (10.8%)
Sweden	3 (4.2%)	3 (4.6%)
Italy	11 (15.3%)	11 (16.9%)
Austria	3 (4.2%)	3 (4.6%)
Israel	1 (1.4%)	1 (1.5%)
Lithuania	3 (4.2%)	3 (4.6%)
Australia	1 (1.4%)	1 (1.5%)
Ireland	2 (2.8%)	2 (3.1%)
2. Are you aware of the EFAD database?	70 (97.2%)	70 (100%)
Yes	25 (34.7%)	25 (35.7%)
No	45 (62.5%)	45 (64.3%)
If yes, from where?	25 (34.7%)	25 (100%)
Via EFAD website	9 (12.5%)	9 (36%)
Via EFAD conference	6 (8.3%)	6 (24%)
Via EFAD newsletter	4 (5.6%)	4 (16%)
Via National Dietetic Association (NDA)	6 (8.3%)	6 (24%)
Other	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
If no, why?	45 (62.5%)	45 (100%)
Previously had not been aware it existed	38 (52.7%)	38 (84.4%)
Difficult to access	3 (4.2%)	3 (6.7%)
Not interested	3 (4.2%)	3 (6.7%)
Other	1 (1.4%)	1 (2.2%)
3. Have you entered your data in the database?	23 (92% of the 25 who responded YES in Q2)	23 (100%)

Yes	10 (40%)	10 (43.5%)
No	13 (52%)	13 (56.5%)
If yes, why?	10 (40%)	10 (100%)
So that others can see it	3 (12%)	3 (30%)
To be able to contact other research dietitians	7 (28%)	7 (70%)
Other	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
If no, why?	13 (52%)	13 (100%)
Accessibility is difficult	1 (4%)	1 (7.6%)
No research dietitian	6 (24%)	6 (46.2%)
Other	6 (24%)	6 (46.2%)
4. Usefulness of database	7 (9.7%)	-
4.a Where could a database of research dietitians in general be used for?		
Contacting colleagues	67 (93.1%)	67 (100%)
Yes	63 (87.5%)	63 (94%)
No	1 (1.4%)	1 (1.5%)
Ongoing	3 (4.2%)	3 (4.5%)
Starting collaboration	66 (91.7%)	66 (100%)
Yes	63 (87.5%)	63 (95.5%)
No	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Ongoing	3 (4.2%)	3 (4.5%)
Promoting the role of dietitians	66 (91.7%)	66 (100%)
Yes	59 (81.9%)	59 (89.4%)
No	3 (4.2%)	3 (4.5%)
Ongoing	4 (5.6%)	4 (6.1%)
Other	9 (12.5%)	-
4.b What could be changed to improve the usefulness of the database?	9 (12.5%)	-
5. Webinar suggested topics (ranked first)	63 (87.5%)	63 (100%)
What is evidence based practice /evidence based dietetics	22 (30.6%)	22 (34.9%)
Literature research	15 (20.8%)	15 (23.8%)
Accessibility to researcher database	11 (15.3%)	11 (17.5%)
Appraising evidence	9 (12.5%)	9 (14.3%)
PICO-method	6 (8.3%)	6 (9.5%)

Conclusions

Although respondents agree that a database of research dietitians could be useful to contact colleagues, to start collaboration and to promote the role of dietitians, only few had used the database for these goals.

It is important to realize that respondents do not reflect the distribution of dietitians across Europe and that this questionnaire is conducted two years after the establishment of the database, which may have influenced results of this survey.

Nevertheless, since 63% of responders was not aware of the existence of the database, the first goal should be to increase this awareness. Secondly, the use and usefulness of the database should be promoted.

Actions to be undertaken are:

- Yearly promotion of the database by the REBPC during the EFAD conference in the REBPC session .
- In collaboration with the ESDNs and ENDietS: dissemination of results / promotion of database
- In collaboration with the NDAs: publication of the results in the NDAs journal and/or website
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