The knowledge level and attitude of faculty members, physicians and paramedics about religious recommendations on nutrition

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Abstract

Aims: Different ideas and viewpoints can be found on religious recommendations about appropriate nutrition. But from the viewpoint of successful people, awareness is beneficial in development and modification of the educational trend and realization of these attitudes. The aim of present study was to determine the awareness and attitude of faculty members, physicians and Paramedics towards the religious recommendations on nutrition.

Methods: This stud cross-sectional descriptive study was performed on faculty members, physicians and Paramedics of one of Tehran hospitals. 178 subjects were selected by randomized sampling and were asked to say how much they were aware of Islamic recommendations on nutrition and their attitude and awareness was classified in three “weak”, “moderate” and “good” levels. Statistical analysis of data was performed by SPSS17 using independent T-test and ANOVA.

Results: Awareness levels of most studied cases was in moderate level as follows: weak (19.2%), moderate (64%) and good (78.8%). The attitude levels were as follows: weak (8.98%), moderate (78.53%) and good (72.47%). The means of awareness and attitude levels of interviewees were 5.408 out of 15 and 61.755 out of 100 respectively.

Conclusion: Faculty members, physicians and Paramedics presented positive and good attitude toward religious recommendations on nutrition; though, their knowledge was mostly at intermediate level. This positive attitude is able to pave the way for development of religious recommendations on nutrition, medicine and health.

Keywords: Awareness, Attitude, Religious Recommendations, Nutrition

Introduction

Understanding of awareness and attitude of individuals in a society regarding different subjects is the first step towards changing the attitudes and perspectives in order to reform, change and develop the concerned areas in scientific and experimental research.

Awareness is the prelude of knowledge and knowledge underlies the human attitudes and trends [1].

It is evident that man uses different tools for acquiring knowledge and learning. In available scientific methods, empirical knowledge and required awareness in this regard have created the foundation of science and has affected the attitude of many scientists and theologians. Experimental science has progressed and evolved gradually over time and at any time some of its methods and recommendations are violated and replaced with other methods that it is indicating of weaknesses and lack of complete development of empirical science and today scientific methods of the world. This progress continues in scientific research for development and mastery of man over matter and nature. All empirical sciences of the today’s world including medical sciences, medicine, health, nutrition and related subcategories are sciences related to the bodies and lives of human beings and beyond that with their souls; also in religious perspective, these sciences have a special position [2, 3].

Islam has paid special attention to such sciences and to subjects like prevention, health and treatment of humans and has provided valuable instructions and recommendations on these issues. We, Muslims, believe that Islam is a complete religion and has raised comprehensive instructions and recommendations for human life and scientific issues. It seems that applying these recommendations and guidelines, besides personal and social impact, can open a new horizon in theoretical and empirical sciences and scientific research areas to scientists and researchers [4].

Although over 1400 years has passed from the appearance of Islamic nutritional recommendations, it can definitely be said that there are cases for exploration and research, which are decodable and can be proved by scientific researches and new research methods. Scattered researches which are done in different parts of the world by researchers and scientists interested in scientific and religious recommendations, confirm this claim. What is
mentioned in these instructions and recommendations seemingly has personal and guidance aspect but the main and dominant trend of religious instructions and recommendations is towards prevention, treatment and health of the human body and soul and can be a guideline for scientists and researchers in many scientific fields. There are different views in this regard and religious philosophers may not fully agree with all the above. Some people know religion solely responsible for human guidance in worship and personal deeds and some others identify the responsibility of the religious in wider aspects including social, political, economical aspects. But the vision that looks to religion at maximum, believes that religion wherever the matter of justice and injustice is considered, whether it has individual or social and governmental aspect, whether it is ethical or scientific matter these instructions have obligations their performance can guarantee the human happiness. Issues such as nutrition, health, treatment, social relationships, moral, economic, etc., are all in the domain of religion and religion is obliged to provide guidance. Because otherwise, the entire purpose of public prophecy and the aim to send prophets is not fulfilled [5, 6, 7].

Islam and its teachings include all the necessities of human life and according to repeated verses and narrations all sciences are embodied in Quran. The holy Quran prescribes that “And (bethink you of) the day when we raise in every nation a witness against them of their own folk” or at the same verse it is mentioned that “We reveal the Scripture unto thee as an exposition of all things”. Considering this claim that every issue is pointed out in Islam, researchers and scientists of university and theological school find methods to extract these guidelines from depth of Quran and according that instructions as a base for research, offer theories and manufacture lucrative science. Quran, undoubtedly, has not forgotten the issue of hygiene and nutrition which are among important affairs of human life and has paid special attention to these issues; therefore, in the verses and narrations, there are many rules and guidelines concerning this matter (Baqara; 259,60) and the health system of Islam can be extracted and implemented by required researches and surveys. An important issue which is repeatedly pointed out in Quran and the words of Imams is leading and guidance of the religion for teaching unachieved truths which human cannot be aware of them without revelation. The Holy Quran said “Even as we have sent unto you a messenger from among you, who recite unto you our revelations and cause you to grow, and teach you the Scripture and wisdom, and teach you that which ye knew not.” (Baqara; 151). It seems that awareness of what we do not know underlie the evolution of human knowledge. Yet, the necessity to investigate the role of religion in evolution and development of science is determined and with this attitude one can discuss the requirements of mechanisms and edition and recommendations of religion science [8]. Hence, for breaking the knowledge boundaries and gaining new sciences there is no choice but to adhere to religious guidelines and recommendations in various fields. Little quantitative studies have been conducted on the level of awareness and attitude towards religious teachings on medicine and health, but regarding the role of awareness and applying religious teachings in health and hygiene numerous investigations have been done all around the world which some of their results are interesting. According to the above mentioned issues, it seems that the effect of religious teachings on nutrition has different results which are neglected due to lack of sufficient investigations on religious instructions and recommendations; therefore, it is necessary to take serious, practical and applied actions for increasing awareness by teaching and instilling culture toward implementing the nutritional teachings of Islam among different classes of the society to overcome this defect. With this point of view this research was conducted in order to determine the level of awareness of some influential people (teachers, physicians, nurses and experts) in scientific and professional societies of nutritional instruction and recommendations of Islam. Knowing about awareness and attitudes of study the nutritional instruction and recommendations of Islam. Finally, the context of empirical research in the field of nutrition and Islamic medicine claimed by teachers and researchers who are interested to this field will be provided.

Methods

In this descriptive cross-sectional study which was done in 2010, official faculty members, physicians and paramedical staff of medical universities of Tehran were selected as the statistical population. The sample size was estimated 170 people that for increasing the statistical validity, 178 people which were selected by categorized sampling were studied. A Researcher made questionnaire was applied for measuring the amount of awareness and attitude towards religion teachings in nutrition after using the
validity and reliability test that included 6 demographic, 15 awareness and 20 attitude questions. Questionnaires were personally given to the study samples and then were completed. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS 17 software using descriptive statistics, independent T-test and ANOVA.

Results

The awareness of most subjects was at “moderate” level. The awareness of 34 subjects (19.2%) was poor, 114 subjects (64%) moderate and 30 subjects (16.8%) good regarding religious nutritional recommendations. The awareness of 30% of physicians and 26.08% of faculty members was at “good” level and awareness of 71.42% of paramedics and 50% of physicians was at “moderate” level (Table 1).

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<tr>
<th>Job</th>
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The attitude of subjects was at “good” level. The attitude of 16 people (8.98%) regarding religious nutritional recommendations was poor. The attitude of 33 people (18.53%) was moderate and the attitude of 129 people (72.47%) was at good level at most cases. Among 34 subjects with poor awareness, 5 people had poor, 8 people had moderate and 21 people had good level of attitude (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The attitude of subjects regarding religious teachings on nutrition</th>
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The attitude of most subjects was at “moderate” level. The awareness of 30% of physicians and 26.08% of faculty members was at “good” level and 19.2% at “low” level regarding religious nutritional recommendations. According to the results of analytical tests individuals’ awareness can be considered at the same level. The results of this research definitely reflect the fact that special attention and effort should be paid to the increasing of subjects and targets’ awareness regarding religious teachings and recommendations about nutrition (considering its requirements). Tavakoli et al. reported that training the nutrition with emphasis on religious teachings has a positive effect on improving the nutritional situation of the military personnel [5]. Ahmari et al. by examining the ignorance causes of GPs working in the private centers of the Ghom regarding Islamic medicine, have emphasized on the need to increase the awareness and attitude towards religious teachings [9]. Khodadadi et al. by examining Islamic nutritional recommendations and the amount of its consistency with medical sciences have emphasized on the need to increase awareness about religious recommendations. They believed that all these recommendations have been made for remaining healthy; having a long life and optimal use of available food resources and there is no harmful order in any of these recommendations [10]. Mussap et al. in their study showed that religious teachings have a significant relationship with the culture of consumption and nutritional behaviors of Australian women in the age group of 18 to 44 years [11]. Kim et al. indicated that religious beliefs affect the weight control process in women compared to men and religious teachings can be used for the weight control of this society class [12]. In the study of Corner et al. the ethical and religious aspects of nutrition has been emphasized [13]. Alton et al. reported that there are many instructions regarding the consumption of fruits and vegetables in various religions and there is a significant relationship between religious trainings and low-fat diet [14]. 9% of faculty members, physicians and the paramedical staff have “poor” attitude, 18.5% have “moderate” attitude and 72.5% have “good” attitude towards the religious teachings about nutrition. In current study, the attitude of the subjects in all studied groups was approximately at the same level. According to the conducted study, it can be said that religious teachings have positive effect on other aspects of life style including improving spirituality and mental status of individuals in addition to nutrition. In the study of Wardwell et al. a correlation has been reported between religious teachings and heart disease, in a way that people who believe in religious recommendations and instructions are less likely to suffer heart attacks [15]. Medali et al. have

Discussion & Conclusion

The awareness of 64% of faculty members, physicians and paramedical staff was at “moderate” level, 16.8% at “good” level and 19.2% at “low” level regarding religious nutritional recommendations. According to the results of analytical tests individuals’ awareness can be considered at the same level. The results of this research definitely reflect the fact that special attention and effort should be paid to the increasing of subjects and targets’ awareness regarding religious teachings and recommendations about nutrition (considering its requirements). Tavakoli et al. reported that training the nutrition with emphasis on religious teachings has a positive effect on improving the nutritional situation of the military personnel [5]. Ahmari et al. by examining the ignorance causes of GPs working in the private centers of the Ghom regarding Islamic medicine, have emphasized on the need to increase the awareness and attitude towards religious teachings [9]. Khodadadi et al. by examining Islamic nutritional recommendations and the amount of its consistency with medical sciences have emphasized on the need to increase awareness about religious recommendations. They believed that all these recommendations have been made for remaining healthy; having a long life and optimal use of available food resources and there is no harmful order in any of these recommendations [10]. Mussap et al. in their study showed that religious teachings have a significant relationship with the culture of consumption and nutritional behaviors of Australian women in the age group of 18 to 44 years [11]. Kim et al. indicated that religious beliefs affect the weight control process in women compared to men and religious teachings can be used for the weight control of this society class [12]. In the study of Corner et al. the ethical and religious aspects of nutrition has been emphasized [13]. Alton et al. reported that there are many instructions regarding the consumption of fruits and vegetables in various religions and there is a significant relationship between religious trainings and low-fat diet [14]. 9% of faculty members, physicians and the paramedical staff have “poor” attitude, 18.5% have “moderate” attitude and 72.5% have “good” attitude towards the religious teachings about nutrition. In current study, the attitude of the subjects in all studied groups was approximately at the same level. According to the conducted study, it can be said that religious teachings have positive effect on other aspects of life style including improving spirituality and mental status of individuals in addition to nutrition. In the study of Wardwell et al. a correlation has been reported between religious teachings and heart disease, in a way that people who believe in religious recommendations and instructions are less likely to suffer heart attacks [15]. Medali et al. have

Table 1- Distribution of relative and absolute frequency of subject’s awareness in terms of job

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Table 2- Comparison of the level of awareness and attitude of the subjects regarding religious teachings on nutrition

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reported that the Jewish who believe in their religion more traditionally, experienced lower rates of heart attack [16]. Philips et al. indicated in a study among Christians (Odonists) that religious teachings are effective in reducing coronary heart disease [17]. Lyon et al. studied the tribal Indians (Mormons) and expressed that religious belief is effective in reducing coronary heart disease and better nutrition, less smoking and other health-related behaviors has more relation with higher religion. Religious people and those who adhere to the religious orders have lower blood pressure compared to others [19]. Colantionio et al. reported that among people aged over 65, those who are religious are less likely to suffer heart attack [20]. In the study of Levine et al., religion dependence and different physical illnesses are examined and these relationships has been described based on diet and other health-related practices [21].

According to the study results of Haman et al., among religion, diet and lifestyle, the role of religion and following the religious instructions is more important in case of suffering from cancer [22]. In the study of Larson et al. the role of believing on religion and following the instructions and advice of religion and its relationship with diseases are pointed out. They stated that life expectancy and unwillingness to death is higher in people with more religious commitment [23]. Dowi et al. in the study of religion’s role in the intensity of cancer complications reported that the level of awareness and believing in religion affects the life expectancy and tolerating cancer and religious people match themselves better with limitations and imposed conditions of cancer complications [24]. In the study of Naguib et al. the higher level of trust in religion is higher in people with more religious commitment [25].

According to the study of Levine et al., the role of religion and following the instructions and advice of religion and its relationship with diseases are pointed out. They stated that life expectancy and unwillingness to death is higher in people with more religious commitment [25].

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