NATIONAL REGISTER
OF HEALTH SERVICE PSYCHOLOGISTS
Psychological Factors Related to Celiac Disease in Pediatric Populations

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Celiac Disease

- Genetic, autoimmune condition – permanent intolerance to gluten (protein commonly found in wheat, rye and barley, but can also be found in medications, cosmetics, etc.)
- Causes inflammation of small intestine and interferes with absorption of nutrients

Celiac Disease

• (More than 200 possible symptoms)

• Behavioral/Psychiatric
  • Depression
  • Anxiety
  • “Brain fog”
  • ADHD symptoms

• Neurological
  • Seizures
  • Migraines
  • Peripheral neuropathies

• Autoimmune
  • Type 1 diabetes
  • Hypothyroidism
  • Rheumatoid arthritis
  • Fibromyalgia

• Gastrointestinal
  • Diarrhea
  • Appetite change
  • Constipation
  • Bloating
  • Vomiting
  • Ulcers

• Nutritional
  • Weight loss
  • Stunted growth
  • Poor weight gain

• Skeletal
  • Osteoporosis
  • Joint, bone, muscle pain
  • Dental enamel defects

Celiac Disease Program at Children's National Health System (http://childrensnational.org/departments/celiac-disease-program)
Psychologists and Celiac Disease

- **Identify patients in need of medical care**
  - Psychologists may be the first point of contact for patients with undiagnosed Celiac Disease
  - Consider Celiac Disease in differential during evaluation and treatment
  - For patients with diagnosed Celiac Disease, consider referral for medical evaluation if somatic symptoms persist despite strict adherence to gluten-free lifestyle

- **Collaboration**
  - Medical provider  
  - Psychologist
  - Patient/Family
Psychologists and Celiac Disease

- Psychosocial challenges related to Celiac Disease
  - Adjustment to Diagnosis
  - Possible comorbid psychiatric symptoms
  - Adherence to a gluten-free lifestyle

Celiac Disease specific skills
- e.g., reading nutrition labels, asking questions about food safety, planning and food preparation

Adaptive coping
- e.g., feeling identification and expression, emotional regulation and problem solving
Psychologists and Celiac Disease

- **Psychosocial challenges related to Celiac Disease**
  - Family
    - Parents
    - Siblings
    - Extended family
  - Friends and Activities
    - Help patients stay *as engaged as possible* while staying safe
    - *Foster social skills* – communication, managing difficult social situations
  - School
    - *504 plan*
    - Close communication and collaboration with *school staff*
Connecting With Resources

• **For patients and families**
  • Education about Celiac Disease and Gluten-free Lifestyle
  • Shopping guides, recipes, college guides, support groups, camps, cooking classes, gluten-free expos, conferences
    • **Celiac Disease Program at Children’s National Health System** ([http://childrensnational.org/departments/celiac-disease-program](http://childrensnational.org/departments/celiac-disease-program))
    • **Celiac Disease Foundation** ([http://celiac.org/](http://celiac.org/))

• **For providers**
  • Education about Celiac Disease and mental health
  • **Knowledge of gluten-free lifestyle** and associated challenges, resources to offer patients and families
    • **Celiac Disease and Gluten-Related Conditions: Psychological Health Training Program** ([http://glutenfreeguide.org/ebook/#t=FINAL_Celiac_Disease_and_Gluten_Related_Conditions_Psychological_Health_Training_Manual_01.htm](http://glutenfreeguide.org/ebook/#t=FINAL_Celiac_Disease_and_Gluten_Related_Conditions_Psychological_Health_Training_Manual_01.htm))
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