

# Study reveals knowledge gap of GPs in dietary advice for weight control

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A new study by The University of Western Australia has shown a knowledge gap in general practitioners' weight loss advice.

Weight-related issues are becoming a growing global concern and the study aimed to explore the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of GPs when providing dietary advice for [weight loss](#).

Researchers from the School of Population and Global Health and Western Australian Center for Rural Health (WACRH) at UWA analyzed 13 studies and found there was a diverse range of weight management advice given by GPs.

Calorie reduction was commonly recommended, but the study identified 32 different types of dietary advice were suggested, including intermittent fasting and ketogenic diets.

The findings indicated GPs were exploring alternative strategies beyond traditional methods, potentially challenging the effectiveness of calorie counting as the sole approach.

The review, published in the journal *Nutrients*, also highlighted the importance of doctors staying up to date with the latest research and guidelines for weight management.

Lead researcher Dr. Hilmi Rathomi said the study highlighted the need for updated guidelines that aligned with the rapidly growing body of evidence on approaches to weight control.

"By equipping GPs with consistent, up-to-date guidelines and encouraging open communication with patients, we can empower individuals to make informed decisions about their weight loss journey," Dr. Rathomi said.

GPs who deviated from established guidelines cited [personal experiences](#) and patient feedback as the basis for their recommendations.

Professor Sandra Thompson, Director of WACRH and co-author of the study, said as obesity rates continued to rise globally, understanding the challenges faced by healthcare professionals to provide effective weight management advice was crucial.

"This study serves as a catalyst for further research and [collaborative efforts](#) to bridge the gap between guidelines and practice, ultimately improving patient outcomes," Professor Thompson said.

**More information:** Hilmi S. Rathomi et al, General Practitioners' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Dietary Advice for Weight Control in Their Overweight Patients: A Scoping Review, *Nutrients* (2023). [DOI: 10.3390/nu15132920](https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15132920)

Provided by University of Western Australia

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