

ASSESSMENT OF AVAILABILITY OF SAFE GLUTEN-FREE DIET TO RESIDENTS OF LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES



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BACKGROUND

Treatment of celiac disease is a strict, lifelong gluten-free diet (GF diet). Individuals with celiac disease in long-term care (LTC) facilities may be vulnerable to gluten cross-contamination as they might lack means of advocating for themselves.

OBJECTIVE

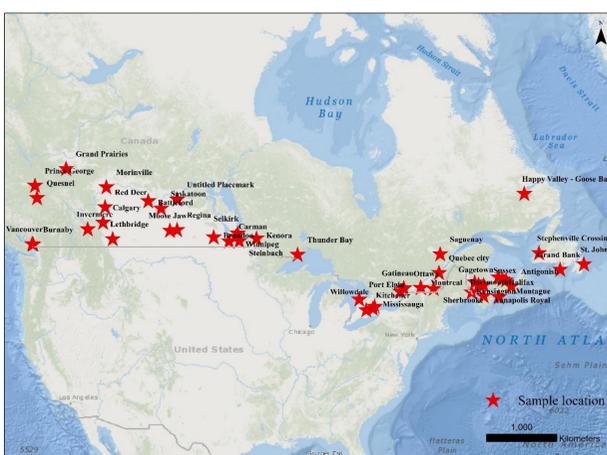
The aim of the study was to identify gaps involved in provision of safe GF diet to residents in LTC facilities.

METHODS

The LTC facilities and the community members of Canadian Celiac Association were surveyed. Community members were surveyed on-line. The web sites of the LTC facilities were reviewed and they were contacted directly.

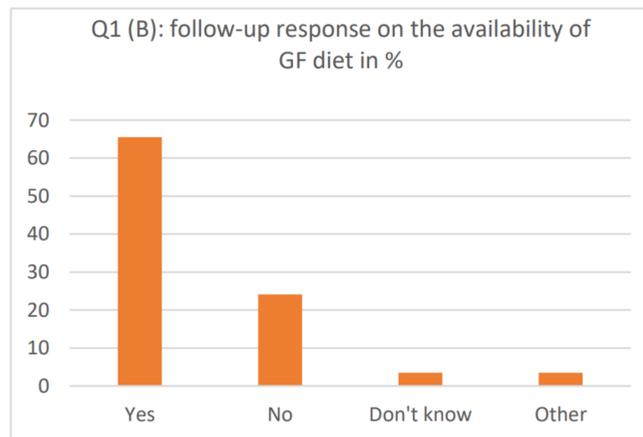
A total of 52 LTC facilities were randomly selected from urban centers of 9 Canadian provinces with bed counts varying from 10 to 280.

Province	City
Alberta	Lethbridge, Calgary, Morinville, Grande Prairie, Red Deer.
British Columbia	Vancouver, Prince George, Invermere, Burnaby, Quesnel.
Manitoba	Brandon, Selkirk, Steinbach, Carman, Winnipeg, Moose Jaw, Battleford.
New Brunswick	Gagetown, St. Andrews, Sussex, Port Elgin, Fredericton.
Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Grand Bank, Stephenville Crossing, Happy Valley - Goose Bay.
Nova Scotia	Dartmouth, Halifax, Annapolis Royal, Antigonish, Sherbrooke.
Ontario	Kenora, Thunder Bay, Willowdale, Carleton Place, Ottawa, Mississauga, Kitchener.
Prince Edward Island	Charlottetown, Kensington, Montague
Quebec	Québec city, Montreal, Saguenay, Saint-Lambert, Gatineau.
Saskatchewan	Regina, Melfort, Saskatoon



RESULTS

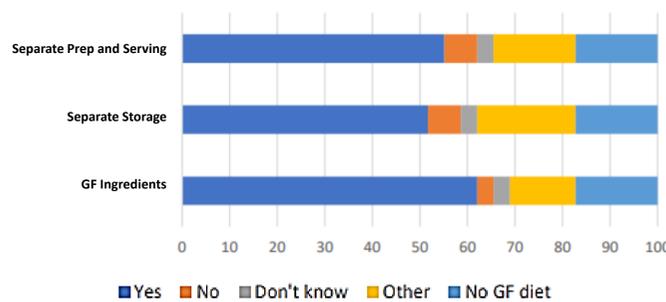
Of the LTC facilities surveyed, 66% regularly provided GF diet while 24% did not. One facility did not know and another could provide GF diet if a resident was admitted.



About a third of facilities currently had at least one resident with celiac disease.

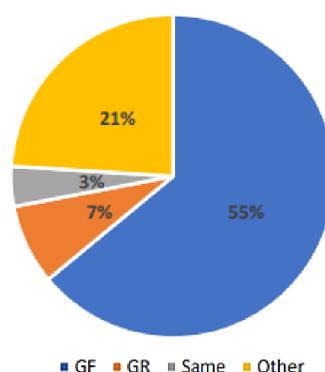
Of the facilities surveyed, 62% confirmed that GF products are used in preparing GF menu items, 52% indicated that those ingredients are stored separately, and 55% indicated that the GF foods are or would be prepared and served separately from other food.

LTC facilities response to possible areas of cross contamination



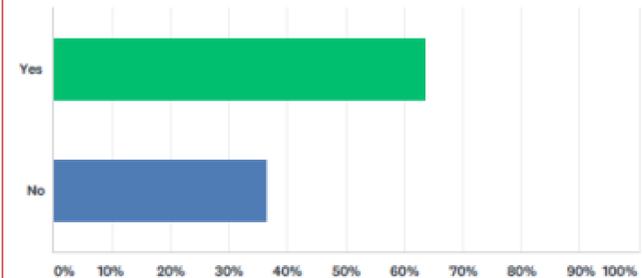
Most of the facilities indicated that they offer a GF diet, while 7% indicated that the menu that they have is gluten-restricted (GR) mainly because of the limited space in the kitchen and the presence of gluten in a wide variety of ingredients. About 21% of facilities indicated that they don't have a GF or GR diet but will accommodate based on residents' needs.

GF or GR diet available at LTC facility



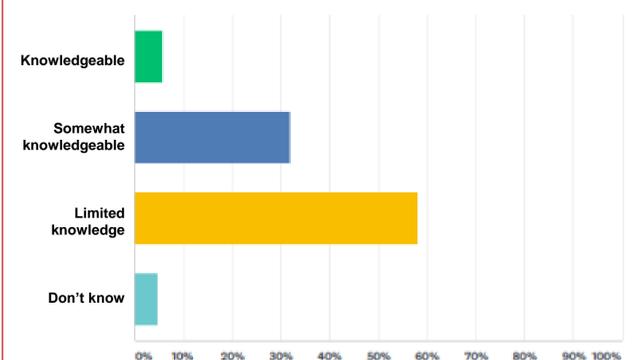
All (n=96) community members contacted completed the survey, 50% on behalf of a family member. Most had difficulty finding a LTC facility because of celiac disease. Several mentioned limited food choices, getting mainly prepackaged products.

Did you find it difficult finding a placement in a facility specially due to celiac disease?



Food service staff seemed to have limited knowledge of GFD and residents, at least at one point, had illness that was directly attributable to gluten cross-contamination.

How would you estimate the level of knowledge on gluten-free diet and cross contamination of food service staff in the facility?



CONCLUSIONS

➤ Availability of LTC facilities that provide safe gluten-free diet is limited.

➤ Food preparation practices in some LTC facilities are sub-optimal, leading to potential risk of gluten cross contamination in meals served to residents.

➤ Strategies need to be developed to properly educate various food service providers in LTC facilities and develop inspection protocols aligned with the needs of residents needing gluten-free diet.

➤ A multidisciplinary approach with all parties involved in the care of residents needing gluten-free diet in LTC facilities is needed. These would include, but not limited to, the Ministry of Health or Health units, Dietitians, Food Service Managers, cooks, Food Service staff, and community members in LTC or moving into a LTC facility.