Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to explore the relationship between nutrition and social work education, practice, and perceptions on nutrition. Licensed master’s level social workers in the state of Michigan (n=45) were recruited online through Grand Valley State University’s School of Social Work listserv, social media, social work professors and colleagues. Participants completed an anonymous online survey through Google Forms which included 18 questions. The online survey involved open and closed-ended questions focusing on 1) integration of nutrition in practice; 2) perceptions on the value of nutrition in social work; and 3) nutrition training during and after graduate school. The statistical tests included descriptive statistics, frequency tables, Spearman’s rho correlations, and independent samples t-tests via SPSS version 22. Qualitative data was analyzed using conventional content analysis and open coding. Results indicate that the majority of social workers integrate nutrition through psychoeducation. Participants primarily perceived nutrition as “moderately valuable” with clients and in the field of social work. Most social workers have not received nutrition education pre or post-graduate school. There is a gap in nutrition in social work practice and education. Most social workers integrate nutrition, but have no formal education on nutrition. Further research is required on the topic of nutrition and social work.