Assessing the suitability of Protein Cards a postoperative nutrition education tool for adolescents who have undergone metabolic bariatric surgery- preliminary findings

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<u>Background:</u> Adherence to dietary guidelines following metabolic bariatric surgery (MBS) is critical for optimizing recovery and preserving fat-free mass, with adequate protein intake playing a key role. However, there is a lack of tailored nutrition education tools for adolescents. This study assessed the suitability of *Protein Cards*, a nutrition education tool that includes 40 protein-rich recipes, in supporting protein intake across the post-MBS diet stages.

<u>Methods</u>: Adolescents aged 14-19 who underwent MBS at the Centre of Excellence in Adolescent Severe Obesity (Montreal Children's Hospital) were recruited. Participants used the *Protein Cards* for 1-2 months. During follow-up clinic visits, semi-structured interviews, adapted from the Suitability Assessment of Materials questionnaire, gathered feedback on the tool's content, literacy demand, graphic illustrations, layout, learning stimulation, cultural appropriateness, and the utility of yogurt icon to denote protein content in recipes.

<u>Results:</u> Six adolescents (16-19 y; 4 male) who underwent laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy participated. Participants reported having used the tool and found the reading level of the *Protein Cards* to be appropriate. The recipes were clear, aligned with their respective dietary stages, and culturally relevant, with recipes adaptable to their preferences. However, participants noted they would have benefited from receiving the tool before surgery. Feedback on the yogurt icon was mixed, with some finding it helpful and others uncertain about its utility.

<u>Conclusion</u>: Preliminary findings suggest that the tool is suitable to assist adolescents meet protein requirements post-MBS. Further research with a larger sample size is needed to validate these findings and refine the tool for clinical implementation.

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