

## Cardiac Rehabilitation Perception among Local Israeli Hospital Physicians and Nurses

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### **Background:**

Cardiac rehabilitation (CR) is an evidence-based risk reduction program for cardiac patients and as such, should be prescribed for all patients. Nevertheless, referral rate varies widely in different settings, and participation rate among eligible patients remains low.

### **Objective:**

To evaluate the perception of CR programs among cardiologists and nurses in selected Israeli hospitals.

### **Methods:**

Cardiologists (n=33) and nurses (n=111) from the cardiothoracic surgery and cardiology departments from Sheba Medical Center and Assuta hospital volunteered to anonymously participate in a survey consisting of a short questionnaire. Information was obtained about perceptions, practices, attitude, and perceived barriers that might influence patients' referral to CR programs. Total participation rate in the survey was 56%; 75% among cardiologists and 50% among nurses.

### **Results:**

Routine referral of cardiac patients to CR services was reported by 84% (95% confidence interval: 76%-92%) of the participants, and was similar among cardiologists and nurses (84% for both). Higher referral rates were reported by nurses from the department of cardiothoracic surgery compared with nurses in the cardiology department (87% vs. 79%). Non-referring cardiologists were younger than referring ones (48±15 vs. 52±11). They also had lower awareness of the position paper of the Israel Society of Cardiology regarding CR services in Israel (25% vs. 90%), and were more likely to perceive their colleagues as not referring to CR (25% vs. 5%) and more skeptical about the importance of CR programs (50% vs. 15%), compared with referring cardiologists. Among nurses, a higher percentage of non-referring vs. referring participants reported having insufficient knowledge regarding CR programs (89% vs. 49%); perceived their colleagues as not referring to CR (78% vs. 36%); and expected their patients to be less compliant with therapeutic recommendations (56% vs. 12%), respectively.

### **Conclusion:**

While higher than expected referral rates to CR programs were reported by hospital physicians and nurses, it is still unknown what perception and referral rates of primary care physicians in the community. Thus, programs to improve referral rates and implementations are required.