

Abstract

# Nutrition Curriculum for Health Professionals: How Can We Spread the Word †

Clare Rosemary Wall

Nutrition and Dietetics, School of Medicine, University of Auckland, Auckland 1041, New Zealand;  
c.wall@auckland.ac.nz

† Presented at the 2018 Nutrition Society of New Zealand Annual Conference, Auckland, New Zealand, 28–30 November 2018.

Published: 5 March 2019

There is an urgency to address diet and nutrition related health behaviours to improve the health and quality of life of New Zealanders. Despite the plethora of research in human nutrition and health, translation of the evidence from this research into practice is challenging. The presence of unfettered information on diet and nutrition in the public domain also adds to confusion and conflict. Patients expect and trust clinicians to be the source of evidence-based health related information including diet and nutrition. However, there is limited nutrition knowledge and practice-ready curriculum in most health care professional training programmes.

Research conducted with medical Students, GP training registrars and GPs in New Zealand has demonstrated that they all have positive attitudes towards incorporating nutrition care into practice. However, GPs perceive that their limited consultation time and lack of nutrition competence is a barrier to provide adequate nutrition care [1,2]. A number of clinical education groups are working towards identifying practice-gaps and ways to enhance nutrition education in existing health professional training programmes. These include but are not limited to the development of national curricula guidelines in the US and Australia (Nutrition Competency Framework, Deakin University). The Nutrition in Medicine Project—a computer-based training tool in the US; the Culinary medicine Project in the US and UK and the Need for Nutrition Education Programme (NNEdPro) Pro Global centre for Nutrition and Health Education Initiatives (Cambridge University).

In New Zealand, we need to consider the implementation of a nutrition framework for curricula for health professional training. Integration of nutrition competency into training programmes will ensure that relevant health professionals are better prepared for working in multi-disciplinary health care teams and have appropriate skills to assess patients for nutritional risk and assist and support their patient community to adopt appropriate nutrition related behaviours.

## References

1. Crowley, J.; Ball, L.; Han, D.Y.; McGill, A.-T.; Arroll, B.; Leveritt, M.; Wall, C.R. Doctors' attitudes and confidence towards providing nutrition care in practice: Comparison of New Zealand medical students, general practice registrars and general practitioners. *J. Prim. Health Care* **2015**, *7*, 244–250.
2. Crowley, J.; Ball, L.; Wall, C. Nutrition advice provided by general practice registrars: An investigation using patient scenarios. *Public Health* **2016**, *140*, 17–22.



© 2019 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).