

Presenting Author

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Title

Working together for better health, past, present and future

Abstract

There is no doubt that there is increasing interest in food, nutrition and health. The emphasis on 'positive health messages' and healthful lifestyles including food and nutrition means that more information than ever before is available. So who provides that information? Traditionally it has been dietitians but now it can be diet advisors or nutrition coaches in fitness centers or nutritionists in private health clinics to name a few many with no formal nutrition degree. At the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, a survey was conducted which identified that the public does not seek help through "dietetics" but now seeks a "nutrition" service. As health professionals we recognize the need to work with others to promote a health lifestyle and positive health message. Are there any steps that dietitians can take to make sure information about food and nutrition is safe and informed while working increasingly in a multi-provision environment?

An example from Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) provides a model. In countries where dietitians and nutritionists train with at least a minimum of a degree in higher education and supervised practice roles are complimentary, but professional quality and outcomes may differ significantly. To protect the public, legal ownership of the "nutrition domain" and 'dietetic domain' had to be captured by AND. The Association undertook a wide consultation process to clarify credentials. The credentialed expert would be called "Registered Dietitian-Nutritionist" (RDN) and the technical assistant "Nutrition-Dietetic Technician, Registered" (NDTR). The RDN, recognized by law, provides "medical nutrition therapy." Some RDNs have a master's in public health and practice as a "public health nutritionist". Would a future credentialising service for those promoting positive health messages through food and nutrition work in Europe? Can dietitians start that discussion?

Key references

Marincic PZ, Hardin A, Salazar MV, Scott S, Fan SX, Gaillard PR. Diabetes Self-Management Education and Medical Nutrition Therapy Improve Patient Outcomes: A Pilot Study Documenting the Efficacy of Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Interventions through Retrospective Chart Review. *J Acad Nutr Diet.* 2017;117(8):1254-1264.
Møller G, Andersen HK, Snorgaard O. A systematic review and meta-analysis of nutrition therapy compared with dietary advice in patients with type 2 diabetes. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2017;106(6):1394-1400.

Kirk S, Woo JG, Jones MN, Siegel RM. Increased frequency of dietitian visits is associated with improved body mass index outcomes in obese youth participating in a comprehensive pediatric weight management program. *Child Obes.* 2015;11(2):202-208.

Presentation - Key messages

- The educational background, supervised practice and experiences of the dietitian or nutritionist may vary, but public safety is the priority.
- Legal protection of titles and various levels of practice should be provided by each country's government.
- Documentation of client/consumer outcomes (positive and negative) should be collected and shared with officials who make decisions about the nutritional well-being of the specific population served.