

Invited Speaker Abstract

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Title

Primary care dietitians in the National Health System

1. Abstract

Managing health should not only be about disease. All around the world the population is growing and ageing. As a result, we have seen in recent decades a shift in main diseases affecting world's population, from infectious to non-communicable chronic diseases. The scientific evidence is very clear: food/nutrition is one of the first and most important determinants of health and the one with the greatest impact on disease protection and health promotion.

A healthier population consumes less from the health care system. Health promotion is therefore the basis of any National Health System (NHS), if its purpose is sustainability. Cooperation, integration and continuity of care are key elements of a healthy (and wealthy) NHS, putting its focus on prevention rather than treatment.

Primary Health Care (PHC) is the best place to conduct proximity interventions that empower individuals and communities for more and better health, and dietitians who work there are especially able for successful interventions. Improving the nutritional status of a population should be the priority of every country's public policies. PHC is the stage for excellence in doing so.

2. Key references

- a. The World Health Report 2008 - Primary Health Care (Now More Than Ever).
- b. World Health Organization 2013. Global action plan for the prevention and control of NCDs 2013-2020.
- c. World Health Organization. Global strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Geneva, 2004.

3. Key messages

- a. Health promotion is the basis of any sustainable national health system
- b. Food/nutrition is one of the first and most important determinants and with the greatest impact on disease protection and health promotion
- c. Improving the nutritional status of a population should be the priority of every country's public policies