

## Invited Speaker Abstract

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### Title

Integrating Dietitian-Nutritionists in Primary Care: a pioneer project in Spain.

### 1. Abstract

Dietary advice in primary care is key for the prevention and treatment of non communicable diseases. Dietitians are specifically trained professionals to improve patient adherence to this cost-efficient intervention. The Regional Professional Body of Dietitians-Nutritionists of Balearic Islands (CODNIB) proposed a project to integrate dietitians in the Regional Health Service (RHS), which includes 3 phases and dietitian profiles: consultant, teacher and leader of a Dietetic Support Unit. The model is similar to that of the Netherlands, where primary care professionals give general advice in dietetics and nutrition, and refer their patients to generalist or specialist clinical dietitians, according to previously established criteria. In 2017 CODNIB and RHS signed a contract to address the first phase of the project, producing dietary advice for 47 disease states such as metabolic risk factors, digestive diseases, diabetes, kidney chronic disease, etc. Two templates were used to produce informative sheets for professionals and patients. The first one justifies the intervention, describes the therapy, and includes the levels of evidence and the criteria to refer patients to the dietitian. The second includes general advice on diet planning, food frequencies and serving sizes, an example of a menu, self-assessment tools and additional sources of information. In light of the call for regional elections, CODNIB began a round of meetings with the political parties represented at the Parliament of Balearic Islands in order to include a proposal in their electoral programs regarding the important role of the dietitians in the RHS. In early 2019 the Parliament unanimously approved a proposition not-of-law, made by the party El Pi Proposta per les Illes, for the full integration of dietitians in the RHS, through which the regional government was explicitly urged to continue with the primary care project. Currently it is in the process of reviewing fact sheets.

### 2. Key references

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- Diari de sessions de la Comissió de Salut del Parlament de les Illes Balears. Proposición No de Llei. RGE15178/18, Incorporació plena del dietista nutricionista al Sistema de Salut de les Illes Balears. Febrer 2019. <http://web.parlamentib.es/repositori/PUBLICACIONS/9/comissions/SA-09-075.pdf>

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### **3. Key messages**

1. The dietary advice provided by a dietitian in primary care is a cost-efficient intervention.
  2. Dietetic associations are key agents to help health systems achieve their goals.
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