

Editorial

Introduction to Special Issue on Nutrition Education: Theory and Practice

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A historical perspective on the education and training of dietetics students from the 1940s was recently presented in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics [1]. This history showed the development of training methods and practices as the profession evolved. Another recent paper in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition [2] described the need for nutrition education across disciplines in health professions, both to promote interdisciplinary collaboration, and to address the growing needs of the public for information and guidance. These papers clearly show that nutrition education has been important in the past, and will continue to be so into the future.

It is therefore my pleasure to introduce this special issue of Open Nutrition Journal, addressing the timely and important topic of theory and practice in nutrition education. While no single issue of a journal could hope to encompass every topic in such an expansive area, this collection of articles addresses a cross section of issues, and thereby makes its humble contribution to the work on this subject. Several content themes emerged in the process of collecting these papers. These have been arranged in a sequence that approximates the organization of programs in nutrition and dietetics as they operate in the United States.

The first paper, (AbuSabha and Dean), reports the results of a survey of directors of Didactic Programs in Dietetics (DPD) and Dietetic Internships (DI), examining how much time they spend on accreditation-related program management activities and the compensation they receive for this workload. Then Tallent *et al.* discuss their study of first year students' and a peer-to-peer nutrition education project.

Looking further along the educational path, the next two papers, Roofe, and Schumacher *et al.*, address acceptance to, and success in dietetic internship programs. Some creative approaches to education of interns are described by Christaldi and Bodzio's paper on teaching cultural competency through a medical mission trip, and research training of interns in community-based participatory research in the paper by Horacek. These discussions of interns' experiential learning activities are followed by a review by Gaba providing some theoretical underpinnings for training health professionals to develop clinical judgment.

Our final three papers each provide a specific example of creative teaching methods having applications in nutrition. Davis examines possible roles for avatars in simulation-based learning. Sharman and Ashby discuss the use of apps, smart phones and tablets, or lack thereof, among nutrition educators in academia. Leung *et al.* describe the process of creating a *manga* (Japanese comic book) to encourage increased consumption of fruit.

It is my sincere hope that these articles will prove to be helpful and inspirational to educators and others. I wish to express my gratitude to the authors who contributed papers to this issue and to all the reviewers who contributed their time, effort, and valuable insights to this undertaking. Any errors of omission or commission in the review and organization of this issue are entirely my own. Thanks are also due to the editors of Open Nutrition Journal for providing me this opportunity to serve as guest editor.

REFERENCES

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