



# NNEdPro Global Centre for Nutrition and Health

*Improving health through medical nutrition knowledge*

## 2017 Events:

- 2nd Summer School in Applied Human Nutrition - 28<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> July
- 3rd International Summit in Medical Nutrition Education and Research - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> August

On behalf of the NNEdPro Group by **Shannon Wongvibulsin, Shivani Bhat and Sumantra Ray**

## Cooking up a Novel Recipe for Medical Nutrition Education

Despite the increasing prevalence of nutrition-related diseases, nutrition education still remains underemphasised in medical school curricula across the world. A potential solution has been introduced in the United States (US) where the state of medical nutrition education mirrors that of the UK. In addition to the lack of nutrition instructional in medical school, a US survey of medical residents showed that only 14% felt adequately trained in nutritional counselling (Vetter). Since the public generally considers doctors as 'very credible' sources of health information (Devries, American Dietetic Association), it is important to effectively incorporate nutrition education in the medical curricula to equip doctors with the skills to deliver meaningful nutrition advice to their patients.

To address the deficiency of nutrition education in the medical profession, 'Teaching Kitchens' have emerged as an interactive, hands-on approach to nutrition education. The overall goals of the 'Teaching Kitchen' model are to enable doctors:

1. To adequately counsel patients on nutrition-related issues
2. To serve as role models of healthy dietary practices in the community.

Over the past decade, 'Teaching Kitchens' started across several institutions in the US. At the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine (JHSOM), faculty and students joined forces with chefs and experts in clinical nutrition to establish the JHSOM Teaching Kitchen in 2015. The objective of this Teaching Kitchen is to bridge the gap between learning about nutrition concepts in lectures and confidently applying these principles in practice.

The JHSOM Teaching Kitchen is unique in that it was student-initiated and founded by first year medical students who recruited faculty mentors as well as registered dietitians and culinary experts. members, registered dietitians, and culinary experts. This multidisciplinary team with medical, nutrition, and culinary expertise have worked together to develop an engaging curriculum to convey essential nutrition knowledge and culinary skills that students can use to counsel patients on the impact of food and diet on their health. Students are also encouraged to personally embrace these practices in their own lives and serve as role models for their patients, family members, friends, and colleagues.

With support from the Johns Hopkins Social Innovation Lab, the leadership team of the JHSOM Teaching Kitchen also formed the B'more Healthy Teaching Kitchen to promote healthy eating directly in the larger Baltimore community. Through these community outreach efforts, students promote healthy eating through fairs and interactive workshops, and learn to better appreciate the socioeconomic barriers of healthy eating faced by their patients.

Transforming the kitchen into a classroom for clinical nutrition education has been well received by both students and faculty members. Students have commented that the hands-on way of

learning is enjoyable and fun. Through the Teaching Kitchen, they learn about nutrition by cooking, tasting the dishes they prepare, and discussing with the chefs, dietitians, and peers how they can improve their own eating habits as well as those of their patients patients'. Some faculty members in the School of Medicine also participated in the Teaching Kitchen themselves. Although the JHSOM Teaching Kitchen is currently a student organisation, faculty members are working with the student leaders to explore potential ways to incorporate the Teaching Kitchen into the formal medical school curriculum.

While the lack of emphasis on nutrition in medical school curricula is far from being solved, the future of the 'Teaching Kitchen' model is promising, as it not only promotes healthy living for doctors themselves but also equips them with the knowledge and skills to help their patients live a healthier life. NNEdPro has partnered with MD/PhD student Shannon Wongvibulsin, one of the founders of the JHSOM Teaching Kitchen, to gain insight into implementing similar models in UK medical schools as a potential strategy to address the need for nutrition education within the medical profession.

References: • Vetter ML, et al (2008). What do resident physicians know about nutrition? An evaluation of attitudes, self-perceived proficiency and knowledge. [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2779722/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2779722/)) • Devries S, et al. A Deficiency of Nutrition Education in Medical Training. ([www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0002934314003088](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0002934314003088)) • American Dietetic Association. Nutrition and you: trends 2008.



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