



Strengthening Doctors' Nutrition Knowledge and Education

The *Need for Nutrition Education/Innovation Programme* (NNEdPro) group is an international collaborative partnership of doctors, dietitians, nutritionists and other health professionals. This multidisciplinary team works together to strengthen nutrition knowledge and education for all medical and health professionals.

In February, the NNEdPro Cambridge Foundation (NCF)* was launched at an inaugural symposium hosted by the NNEdPro Group at Wolfson College, University of Cambridge. The finalists of the NNEdPro National Essay Competition for junior doctors/medical students were also showcased at the event, which was attended by a range of stakeholders including experts in nutrition, public health, medical education and related disciplines. Attendees included the Chair-Elect of the British Dietetic Association (BDA), Dr Fiona McCullough, and the Lord Balfe of Dulwich, who is the incoming Honorary Patron of the NNEdPro Group. Representatives of Universities, Colleges, the NHS and the Medical Research Council (particularly from the Human Nutrition Research unit), were also in attendance.

The NNEdPro Founder/Chairman, Dr Sumantra Ray, RNutr, and Vice-Chair, Pauline Douglas, RD, made the opening remarks and announced the NCF as an independent incorporated platform for healthcare education and research. This represents a strengthening of the partnership between the NNEdPro Group and University of Cambridge, through affiliation with Cambridge University Health Partners (which includes the University of Cambridge School of Clinical Medicine and Cambridge University Hospitals) and Wolfson College, University of Cambridge.

Professor Martin Kohlmeier, a pioneer in medical nutrition education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (USA), delivered the distinguished inaugural lecture of the NCF entitled *The NIH Nutrition in Medicine Project and US Experience of Medical Nutrition Education*. Professor Kohlmeier presented evidence on the state of nutrition education in US medical schools, as well as examples of instructional and assessment approaches of the Nutrition in Medicine (NIM) curriculum. The NIM is an online platform for "evidence-based clinical nutrition education for medical students, residents, fellows, and other physicians." During his lecture, Dr Kohlmeier focused on the need to build stronger clinical nutrition skills in students and highlighted the importance of treating 'nutrition as medicine' when working with clinically focused professionals.

The global impact of the NNEdPro group was highlighted in the presentation by the NNEdPro Global Innovation Panel (GIP), co-led by Dr Lauren Ball, RD, and Celia Laur, RNutr. Their presentation outlined recent work promoting global knowledge exchange and action regarding nutrition education for medical and health professionals. There are currently representatives in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, USA, Italy, Ireland, UK and South Asia. Whilst there

is a common core to nutrition knowledge across all countries, the projects of the GIP are adapted to meet the different countries own unique needs. More information on the GIP is available at: www.nnedpro.org.uk/nnedpro-global-2/

A focus on the importance of having a scientific underpinning to nutrition knowledge and messaging was provided by Associate Professor Daniele Del Rio of the University of Parma (and Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge). He described how a priority for the NNEdPro Group is to identify key knowledge gaps that require research to strengthen the evidence base for translation to practice. A demonstration of this is his work with the Nutrition and Vascular Studies/Cardiovascular Prevention theme within NNEdPro, which takes the need for further evidence around dietary interactions and vascular function to initiate research projects within the academic environment.

Highlighting the essential role of early education within the medical curriculum and their support for NNEdPro, Dr Steve Gillam (University of Cambridge School of Clinical Medicine), Professor Joanne Hackett and Jessica Watts (Cambridge University Health Partners) described a number of evolving interfaces between medical students, doctors and consultants that have occurred, or are planned in the near future, via the NNEdPro-University of Cambridge partnership.

Dr Sumantra Ray closed the inaugural symposium highlighting the three areas of focus for the new NNEdPro Cambridge Foundation:

- Nutrition Education and Training (particularly for healthcare professionals)
- Cardiovascular Nutrition Research (emphasising translation to practice)
- Global Knowledge Exchange (including an annual international meeting).

This exciting work from the new NCF and for NNEdPro as a whole continues to go from strength to strength, with the NNEdPro Group contributing to the World Congress of Public Health in India and the American Society for Nutrition meeting at Experimental Biology in Boston this Spring alone.

The event finished with the poignant reminder from Dr Ray that the inter-professional partnership between key organisations is vital if we are to have any chance of improving nutrition education for better healthcare professionals, both within and across borders.

Let food be thy medicine...

Over the past few months, essays were submitted from across the country by medical students and junior doctors with their responses to the question:

How is the ancient statement “*Let food be thy Medicine...*” still relevant in healthcare today and how might this be implemented given the competing issues currently affecting the NHS?

An overwhelming number of essays were submitted, and after careful deliberation 3 finalists were invited to Cambridge to deliver a presentation about their essay at the inaugural NCF symposium.

The finalists were:

- Catherine Meachin - ‘*Malnutrition in hospitalised patients*’
- Benjamin Norton - ‘*Delivering nutritional health effectively within the NHS: a need for better identification, risk stratification, and referral services*’
- Rachel Wilson - ‘*The role of nutrition in UK healthcare*’.

Introduced by Pauline Douglas, RD, the three finalists presented to the audience practical and impassioned examples of how they feel nutrition and malnutrition could be addressed within hospitals and care settings. The judging panel comprised of Lord Richard Balfe, Dr Fiona McCullough RD, Professor Martin Kohlmeier, Jessica Watts, Pauline Douglas RD and Dr Minha Rajput-Ray.

The 2015 winner was Catherine Meachin, who the judges described as having *demonstrated a deep understanding of the issue as well as suggested an innovative, yet practical solution.*

In her presentation, Catherine described how using Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) could be a method to stimulate local businesses to encourage their staff to volunteer at the local hospital during their lunch break. With the current demands on hospital staff time, many wards are unfortunately too busy to be able to have the time or staff capacity needed to dedicate to assisting patients during mealtimes and this provides a potential solution to this issue. Catherine described an elegant model for implementation, as well as for evaluating such an initiative.



NNEdPro National Essay Competition for junior doctors/medical students, winner Catherine Meachin receiving her award from Lord Richard Balfe.

The NNEdPro Group

The UK NNEdPro Group is an independent collaborative platform for knowledge generation, translation and evaluation, representing a strategic partnership between doctors, dietitians, nutritionists, and other healthcare professionals. It is composed of several partner organisations including the British Dietetic Association, UK Medical Research Council Human Nutrition Research (incorporating the UK National Diet and Nutrition Survey), Society for Nutrition Education and Behaviour, University of Ulster School of Biomedical Sciences, Cambridge University Hospitals and University of Cambridge School of Clinical Medicine. www.nnedpro.org.uk.



The NNEdPro Group, Symposium Delegates and National Essay Competition Finalists

*Key NCF members include: Dr Sumantra Ray (Founder-Chairman/Programme Director; Cambridge); Pauline Douglas (Vice-Chairman/ Education Director; Ulster and Cambridge); Dr Daniele Del Rio (Scientific Director, Parma and Cambridge); Dr Minha Rajput-Ray (Lead Medical Advisor); Dr Lynn McGuffin, Marietta Sayegh, Laura Fitzpatrick, Celia Laur, Dr Lauren Ball, Jennifer Crowley, Dr Rajna Golubic and Dr Jane Maddock.