

## Topic Area: Undergraduate Education and Dietetic Internship

**Abstract Title:** Evaluating the Health at Every Size® Curriculum for Use as a Weight Bias Reduction Tool with Canadian Dietetic Students Mills C<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dalla Lana School of Public Health and Department of Nutritional Sciences, University of Toronto

**Objectives:** To determine if the Health at Every Size (HAES) curriculum could serve as a weight bias reduction tool for dietetic students in Canada.

**Methods:** A search of academic literature and grey literature was conducted to determine best practices in weight bias reduction interventions. Google Scholar and the keywords "weight bias reduction" were used. A total of 261 articles were identified; of these six described best practices for weight bias reduction. The HAES curriculum was then evaluated using these best practices. The curriculum was also compared to the foundational knowledge required of Canadian dietetics students in order to determine its suitability for use in undergraduate programs.

**Results:** The HAES curriculum includes many of the components required for effective weight bias reduction interventions, such as including information on weight bias, focusing on health not weight, and the use of multiple strategies. However, it is missing some important pieces, including an in-depth look at the etiology of overweight and obesity. A number of the concepts it covers would also allow undergraduate students to acquire some of the foundational knowledge required for entry into dietetic practice.

**Conclusions:** The HAES curriculum could be used as a weight bias reduction tool in Canadian dietetics programs. However, it would be strengthened by including more information on the etiology of obesity, discussing common obesity myths and stereotypes, and profiling individuals who challenge those stereotypes. Canadian information and examples should also be included.

**Significance to the field of dietetics:** Studies have shown that weight bias occurs among dietitians and dietetics students. Since weight bias has numerous negative consequences for clients, it is important to reduce the prevalence of weight biased attitudes in dietetics professionals. The HAES curriculum, with some modifications, could be incorporated into undergraduate dietetics programs in Canada and serve as a weight bias reduction tool.