

Abstract Title

Culinary Medicine Labs: A Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) Pilot

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Abstract

Purpose: To pilot and evaluate an interprofessional education model involving Registered Dietitians (RDs), dietetic interns and medical students to determine the perceived need and potential for enhanced nutrition curriculum at NOSM.

Process: Culinary Medicine Labs (CML) are common in many US medical schools as a way to integrate nutrition into medical education curriculum. The Northern Ontario Dietetic Internship Program (NODIP) at NOSM partnered with two medical student groups to pilot four CMLs; three in Sudbury and one in Thunder Bay, ON. These two-hour sessions were facilitated by two RDs supported by two dietetic interns at each site. Each session included up to 12 medical students who completed individual evaluations to assess their learning and confidence related nutrition, food skills, and nutrition competence as future physicians. Research Ethics waivers were received from Laurentian and Lakehead Universities.

Systematic approach used: Each site secured a local teaching kitchen and liability insurance coverage. Students were recruited through word of mouth, posters and student newsletters. Participation was voluntary and outside the school schedule. Each session included a food skills demonstration; meal preparation; a lecture/discussion; and, a meal/closing. Written evaluations were completed at the end of each session. All responses were anonymous; results were collated after each session to guide the next session and inform future planning efforts to integrate similar sessions into the formal curriculum.

Conclusions: These hands-on culinary sessions increased medical students' personal nutrition knowledge and food skills and provided new concepts and strategies around nutrition care as future physicians.

Recommendations: Future CMLs require dedicated NODIP resources and funding including faculty stipendiaries. Suitable space and adequate equipment on campus and integration into the formal curriculum would increase access and participation for all students.

Significance to the field of dietetics: This innovative approach can enhance both the nutrition curriculum and the roles of RDs in medical education.