

Education, Training and Counselling

A Recipe for Nutrition Competent Physicians

L.Rysdale¹, A. Hurley¹, C. Green², V. Ng²

¹Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Sudbury, ON, ²Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Thunder Bay, ON

Purpose: Culinary Medicine Labs (CMLs) formally integrate lifestyle approaches into medical school curricula to increase nutrition competence of graduates and encourage healthy habits, which can translate to improved patient care and health outcomes. A multi-prong approach was used to demonstrate a need for mandatory, integrated CML curriculum at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM).

Process: Two focus groups with first year medical students (2016-17) showed a need for practical sessions on nutrition, healthy eating, food preparation and meal planning. In 2017-18 and 2018-19, four and twelve CMLs were piloted respectively with research ethics waivers from Laurentian and Lakehead Universities. Each session involved up to 12 self-selected students; individual evaluations assessed learning and confidence related to nutrition, food skills, and nutrition competence as future physicians. A 16-item needs assessment using Qualtrics was conducted prior to the first CML in September 2018. An environmental scan (Fall 2018) informed draft curriculum which was validated by three medical students (Years 1, 2 and 3 respectively). Nutrition gaps were highlighted through proposals, meetings, and invited presentations.

Systematic approach used: Multiple data sources (focus groups, needs assessment, environmental scan) plus targeted implementation, evaluation and content validation informed a comprehensive, integrated CML curriculum that supports numerous accreditation requirements including self-care. Advocacy and promotion demonstrated high interest and need for mandatory integration.

Conclusions: This experiential interprofessional learning model provides new concepts and strategies around nutrition care for medical students. Twelve hours of instructional activities via six CMLs have been aligned with NOSMs Year 1 medical curriculum; implementation planned for 2019-20.

Recommendations: The medical culture needs to recognize the role of nutrition in medical education as well as self-care. Food and nutrition content should be woven into the entire curriculum.

Significance to the Field of Dietetics: The CML model can enhance medical nutrition curriculum and the roles of RDs in medical education.