

## **Creating an interactive timeline of Canadian dietetic history: media dietetics**

*E. Pellizzari<sup>1</sup>, A. Proulx<sup>1</sup>, T. Babic<sup>1</sup>, L. Dietrich<sup>3</sup>, M. Wyatt<sup>2</sup>, Q. Zhan<sup>1</sup>, P. Brauer<sup>1</sup>, J. Randall Simpson<sup>1</sup>. <sup>1</sup>Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition, University of Guelph, Guelph, ON; <sup>2</sup>Consultant, London, ON, <sup>3</sup>Consultant, Haliburton, ON.*

**Introduction:** The history of dietetic practice was most recently recorded in the 1993 publication, *Canadian Dietitians: Making a Difference*. At this time, the role of dietitians working in traditional media (television, radio, newspaper etc.) was emerging. Additionally, social networking websites were non-existent until years following this book's publication. Thus, historical record in this area of practice is lacking and documentation is required.

**Objectives:** To develop a timeline and conduct key informant interviews to describe the historical experience of dietitians working in traditional and social media from a Canadian perspective since 1993.

**Methods:** A draft timeline of media dietetics was created based on a literature review and descriptions of key media initiatives provided by informants. Eleven key informants completed semi-structured audio-taped telephone interviews, using the draft timeline as a starting point. Recordings were transcribed and coded by six research team members for descriptive and interpretive content using thematic analysis. A social ecologic framework was used to organize themes.

**Results:** Interviewees worked in 9 provinces while involved in the media including Ontario (n=7), Manitoba (n=4), Quebec (n=3), British Columbia (n=2), Nova Scotia (n=2), Saskatchewan (n=2), New Brunswick (n=1), Alberta (n=1) and Prince Edward Island (n=1). They reported 6-41 years of dietetic work experience in the media (mean: 22.2 years). Five main meta-themes emerged from the interviews. (1) Media involvement and the expansion from traditional to social media; (2) advances associated with using media in dietetic practice; (3) challenges associated with using media in dietetic practice; (4) media dietetics emerging through DC initiatives and advocacy; and, (5) implications of COVID-19 on the role of media dietitians.

**Conclusions:** Media dietitians play a key role in educating the public and act as trusted and credible sources of nutrition information. Over the past quarter-century, through advances in technology and the development of the internet, Canadian media dietetics has evolved dramatically.

**Significance:** These findings will be used to inform dietitians and students about the history of the profession. A better understanding of dietetic practice in the media can also guide future developments and increase public awareness of the work that dietitians do.

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