

Other

Canadian dietetic history of Long-Term Care

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Introduction: There have been dramatic changes in dietetic practice in long-term care (LTC) across Canada over the past 28 years since the last history of dietetics in Canada was published. **Objectives:** To create a timeline and to understand perspectives of registered dietitians (RDs) on dietetic practice specific to LTCs.

Methods: A timeline was drafted based on document reviewed and information gathered from key informants. Historical perspectives on dietetic practice were obtained from semi-structured telephone interviews with RDs in the field. Recorded interviews were transcribed (NVIVO) and coded using thematic analysis, with verification of transcription and coding done by team members.

Results: Key informants were 15 females (14 RDs and 1 non-RD) from eight provinces in Canada with a mean of twenty years (SD 8.1) of work experience in LTC. Seven themes were generated related to changes in dietetic practice in LTC including: 1) Changing funding, legislation and regulation; 2) internal changes such as aging facilities and increasing complexity of LTC residents; 3) positive aspects such as dietetic practice being supported by networks and technology as well as RDs roles being recognized; 4) advocacy at institutional and provincial level; 5) changes in RD roles and responsibilities such as ongoing education and completing the Resident Assessment Instrument tool; 6) challenges of working in LTC facilities such as lack of dietitian time and lack of regulations, and 7) COVID. Effects of COVID had both negative and positive influences on RDs in LTC, from an initially slow reaction to COVID spread to the positive effects of increased teamwork and sense of community.

Conclusion: Dietitians' roles and responsibilities have changed since 1993 from factors both internal and external to LTC.

Significance: This research will update the history of Canadian dietetics in LTC and will provide future direction for improving RD roles in this field.

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