

Interdisciplinary Collaboration to Develop Subjective Global Assessment Practice Session for Dietetics Students

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Purpose

Learning to assess for malnutrition is essential for dietetics training and practice, especially considering the Hospital Standards Organization's (CAN/HSO 5066:2021) Malnutrition Prevention, Detection and Treatment Standard¹. The Integrated Nutrition Pathway for Acute Care (INPAC)² provides structure for nutrition care and Subjective Global Assessment (SGA) implementation. Students benefit from diverse teaching methods to develop communication, critical thinking, and physical exam skills, so a simulated event for pre-internship training was created for SGA practice using standardized patients (SPs) to prepare for real patient contact. Partnership with Nursing Educators provided guidance and resources to successfully create the curriculum.

¹<https://healthstandards.org/standards/malnutrition-prevention-detection-and-treatment/>
²<https://nutritioncanada.ca/resources-and-tools/hospital-care-igpac/>

Process

In 2022, a small survey was completed with McGill Dietetics internship students indicating a lack of confidence to conduct nutrition focused physical exams. The Dietetics Program then requested mentoring from McGill's Ingram School of Nursing (ISoN) and CEGEP John Abbott's Nursing Program (JANP) on how to effectively develop physical exam simulated learning, hire SPs, and set up the event. This collaboration led to an ongoing interdisciplinary partnership.

Approach

Pre-internship curriculum was reviewed, and gaps were identified following restructuring during COVID-19 restrictions. Consultations with ISoN and JANP simulation experts were completed. One scenario was written with key indicators for malnutrition risk assessment and used for all hired SPs. JANP provided patient ward simulation space and consultation. Students received a classroom training on INPAC and practiced the SGA with peers. A week later 60 students working in pairs completed the SGA through a 15-minute simulation with an SP. The simulation was immediately followed by a 5 minute debrief using an SGA checklist for feedback done by an evaluator and 2 peers. All pairs observed a second scenario and provided peer feedback using the SGA checklist. Students appreciated the practice session.

• Review of pre-internship curriculum. Informal survey of student's perceptions of confidence that identified gap in nutrition focused physical exam knowledge and skills

• Consultation with Ingram School of Health and observation of Nursing OSCE

• Consultation with John Abbott Nursing and planning for January Simulation in JAC Hospital Teaching Ward

• Revision of Stage course outline to integrate INPAC and SGA training into curriculum
• Development of scenario, evaluation and hiring of actors

• Pre-course survey (n=43): Perceived readiness for nutrition care: 72% not confident to perform a physical exam
• Stage course: INPAC and SGA with in-class practice session January 23
• Meeting with John Abbott Sim Lab team, Simulated actors, feedback and final adjustments

• Simulation event with SGA 'in-class' activity with 6 SP's and 2 groups of 30 students
• Peer evaluations and debriefing sessions that included SPs
• Plan for ongoing collaboration with JANP
• Reflection for next year



Scenario and Simulated Event Plan

SGA Simulation Practice SP Case:

You are about to meet **Alex Smith** (DOB January 20, year per pt) to **evaluate them for malnutrition using the SGA**. The patient was referred following an 'at nutrition risk' CNST screen (2 yes responses).

- Reason for admission 2 days ago: pneumonia (not Covid).
- PMHx: fall 3 months ago resulting in broken right wrist, shoulder and front teeth. Shoulder surgical repair was done 6 weeks ago at the day hospital.

JAC Hospital Ward Plan

• Each pair will have 20 minutes to do EACH the following activities and receive feedback:

1. SGA practice: Complete a hands-on interview and physical exam with the Standardized Patient(SP)using the SGA form
2. Observe another group doing the SGA with SP and complete the SGA checklist
3. Conduct an anthropometric assessment of a baby and complete the WHO charts for wt, ht and head circumference

Conclusion

Dietetics programs benefit from interdisciplinary in-person collaboration on simulated learning approaches, especially after the pandemic. Practice simulation sessions on malnutrition assessment enhance physical exam, critical thinking, and communication skill development for students.

Recommendation and Significance

Recommendation: Encourage collaboration between disciplines to enhance hands-on training to recognize malnutrition and better prepare dietetics students for clinical practice settings.

Significance: Partnership between nursing and dietetics serves as an innovative teaching model that enhances student learning and access to simulated learning spaces.