MEDEATS: A NOVEL, INTERACTIVE APPROACH TO NUTRITION EDUCATION

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Background: Nutritional interventions are important therapies for chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and liver disease. These interventions require extensive behavioral modifications that can be time and labor intensive for providers. Despite the importance of such interventions, few health profession programs teach the skills necessary to provide nutrition counseling. To address this gap, we developed an innovative approach to nutrition education based on interactive and interprofessional techniques.

Objectives: This project aimed to increase health profession students' knowledge about nutrition and confidence with nutritional intervention for patients. Additionally, we sought to increase an understanding of interprofessional teamwork in providing such interventions.

Methods: A self-selected sample of health profession trainees in the MD, BSN, PA, and DPT programs at Duke were enrolled in a curriculum consisting of four sessions. At each session, students participated in an interactive cooking class, followed by a roundtable discussion of select topics in nutrition facilitated by experts. Using a pre- and post-intervention design, this study evaluated any changes in study participants' knowledge of, attitudes towards, and proficiency in providing nutrition education to patients through self-rating on two validated surveys with Likert scales. Forty students participated in a series of sessions in spring 2017 and data from this series is reported below. Another series with a new cohort of students will be conducted in fall 2017.

Results/Outcomes/Improvements: Participants' perception of the importance of nutrition counseling and confidence in providing nutrition counseling increased after this intervention. More participants agreed that nutrition counseling should be a part of routine care by all healthcare professionals, regardless of specialty (average rating increased from 4.3 to 4.7, $p=0.035$). Furthermore, participants gained a better understanding of the training and roles of other health care providers: more of them agreed that they better understood the roles of other health care providers (average rating increased from 3.7 to 4, $p=0.030$) and that patient satisfaction is improved when patients are treated by an interprofessional team (average rating increased from 4.1 to 4.8, $p=0.004$).

Significance/Implications/Relevance: This interprofessional and experiential program described provides a unique method for engaging health profession students in nutrition education. Participants reported that they better understood nutrition interventions after this program and expressed increased enthusiasm in incorporating these interventions in their future practice. Early evidence suggests that an experiential and interprofessional model is an effective method for teaching nutrition to and deepens understanding of different roles among future health care professionals. Future work will center on expanding and improving this program across health professional programs at Duke while constructing a formal curriculum that enables similar programs at other sites.