



Manifesto on Nutrition Education in Medical Schools

International

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NUTRITION EDUCATION IS A GREAT ABSENTEE IN THE CURRICULUM OF EUROPEAN DOCTORS

ESPEN LAUNCHES THE EUROPEAN MANIFESTO TO FILL THE TRAINING GAP

“During the medical training at the University the students should receive mandatory information about human nutrition in its three different domains, including basic nutrition, applied or public health nutrition and clinical nutrition”, as indicated in the “Manifesto for the Implementation of Nutrition Education” just released in Nice during the ESPEN-NEMS meeting.



NEMS meeting Nice Jan 19th. 51 delegates from 34 countries (not only Europe), and 13 deans/vicedeans/rectors

“The way to organise these themes in the curriculum, also including novel teaching tools, internet resources and e-learning, will depend on each University centre, taking into consideration the different possible models of teaching (parallel, integrated or case-solving based), the availability of teachers and the distribution of time and credits with the rest of teaching subjects” the Manifesto says.

35% of hospitalised patients develop disease-related malnutrition

Although the teaching of nutrition is an essential element of medical training, a recent survey (1) has shown that there is an

extreme variability in the educational standards of this subject in medical schools worldwide. As a consequence, there are differences in the access and quality of treatments received by patients.

Worldwide, more than 2 billion adults are overweight, 600 million obese and 462 million malnourished. These conditions contribute to 60% of cardiovascular death and 35% of tumor death. Even less known is that 35% of hospitalised patients develop disease-related malnutrition, a real 'disease in a disease'.

"Weight loss in chronic, oncological, elderly and frail patients is an underestimated and under-diagnosed problem" Professor Rocco Barazzoni, ESPEN Chairman, explains. "Loss of weight and muscle mass leads to a higher rate of complications, worse response to therapies, higher mortality and increase in healthcare expenditures. This occurs in spite of the well documented positive and cost-effective impact of nutritional therapy on treatment side effects and disease outcomes.

Professor Rocco Barazzoni: Weight loss in (...) patients is an underestimated and under-diagnosed problem.

"Implementing training is urgent" echoes Professor Maurizio Muscaritoli, Coordinator of the NEMS initiative together with the Spanish Professor Cristina Cuerda. "Learning nutrition is mandatory for future doctors. Seeking political support, forming ad hoc committees for the development of curricula and teaching modalities are among the key factors to allow for the implementation of nutrition training in universities"

Professor Maurizio Muscaritoli: "Implementing training is urgent"

"Nutrition education in undergraduate medical schools is heterogeneous and largely under-powered (...) teachers and students believe that the time dedicated to nutrition teaching is insufficient and far from what would be needed."



Professor Cristina Cuerda

The recently published ESPEN position paper (2) has identified the "minimum curriculum knowledge" in nutrition that serves to improve the training of the future doctors. This has been transferred into the Manifesto which was issued and signed by the 51 participants, including delegates of 13 European Medical Schools, representing 34 countries.

1. Cuerda et al – A clinical nutrition education in medical schools: results of an ESPEN survey – Clin Nutr (2017);36:915-6
2. Cuerda et al – Nutrition education in medical schools (NEMS). An ESPEN position paper – Clinical Nutrition (2019); 38: 969-974

[ESPEN \(https://www.espen.org/\)](https://www.espen.org/) (European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism) is an organization dedicated to all issues relevant to the field of clinical nutrition and metabolism and promotes: basic and clinical research, basic and advanced education and organization of consensus statements about clinical care and care quality control.

NEMS is an initiative of the ESPEN Nutrition Education Study Group (NESG)

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