

## 9 SELF-PERCEIVED NUTRITION COMPETENCIES OF PHARMACISTS WORKING IN IRELAND: A SURVEY

<sup>1</sup>Jacqueline Chawke, <sup>1</sup>Helen Conway, <sup>1</sup>Megan Keane, <sup>2,3</sup>Pauline Douglas, <sup>4,5</sup>Dervla Kelly, <sup>1,5</sup>Anne Griffin\*. <sup>1</sup>School of Allied Health, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland; <sup>2</sup>Nutrition Innovation Centre for Food and Health (NICHE), Ulster University, Coleraine, UK; <sup>3</sup>NNEdPro Global Institute for Food, Nutrition and Health, Cambridge, UK; <sup>4</sup>School of Medicine, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland; <sup>5</sup>Health Research Institute, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

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**Background** Community pharmacies provide an ideal setting to address diet and nutrition-related issues and promote positive eating habits among the public. However, there is limited evidence of the expertise among pharmacists to deliver evidence-based nutrition information. In Ireland, there is a lack of existing literature relating to self-perceived nutrition competencies of practising pharmacists.

**Objectives** The aim of this study was to assess registered Irish pharmacists' knowledge and confidence when delivering nutrition care to the public.

**Methods** Cross-sectional study using mixed methods design consisting of an anonymous online survey delivered to registered pharmacists with the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI). The pharmacists' self-perceived confidence in knowledge, skills, communication and counselling, and attitudes in nutrition care were assessed using the validated NUTCOMP questionnaire. Qualitative responses to nutrition knowledge requirements of pharmacists were also gathered. Data in the free text narratives was coded into themes and subthemes. Responses were analysed using descriptive statistics. A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

**Results** A total of n=557 (14.9% response rate; 74% (n=413) female; 1.6% (n=9) gender not stated) respondents completed the questionnaire. The mean number of years practising as a registered pharmacist was 18 ( $\pm 10.1$ ). Most respondents (60.8%) had completed a programme with some nutrition content. Previous nutrition education was positively associated with greater score counts in knowledge, skills, communication/counselling and attitudes towards nutrition care ( $p=0\leq.001$ ). Over three-quarters of respondents (78.1%) agreed that they would require further nutrition education to support their roles as pharmacists. Thematic analysis identified barriers to providing nutritional care in practice as time constraints, a lack of nutrition knowledge in the pharmacy field and the need for continuing nutrition education.

**Conclusion** Irish pharmacists expressed a desire to incorporate nutrition education to support them in their role as confidence in competencies of nutrition care is currently lacking. Through their broad exposure to the general population of Ireland, pharmacists may prove valuable to deliver nutrition care to both healthy persons and those living with chronic diseases.

## 10 FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN KEY HEALTHCARE WORKERS DURING THE FIRST WAVE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A CASE STUDY INFORMING EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS

<sup>1</sup>James Bradfield\*, <sup>2</sup>Ally Jaffee, <sup>1</sup>Iain Broadley, <sup>1</sup>Sumantra Ray. <sup>1</sup>NNEdPro Global Institute for Food, Nutrition and Health, Cambridge, UK; <sup>2</sup>Nutritank CIC, London, UK

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**Background** The COVID-19 pandemic brought food and nutrition security to the fore in many sectors like never before. It altered purchasing behaviours in the United Kingdom, including that of food and other essential products. This survey sought to identify how the pandemic changed behaviours of specific populations. The primary targets were health-care professionals working in the National Health Service (NHS) while a secondary target were students training to work in the NHS.

**Objectives** To assess how the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic affected food choices and eating behaviours of frontline healthcare staff and students.

**Methods** A semi-qualitative, online survey was conducted to gain an understanding of the challenges faced during the pandemic, in a manner that can inform a future blueprint on occupational nutrition education for healthcare professionals. As a semi-qualitative survey, it sought to describe subjective experiences and recognise patterns or recurring themes. The participants were either healthcare professionals in the NHS or students training to be healthcare professionals in the NHS.

**Results** Many in the survey commented on choosing quick options that would save them time while others made use of techniques such as batch cooking and freezing meals for later. They called for an end to stockpiling of materials, a trend seen frequently in the first wave of the pandemic. This survey indicated that overall, frontline workers and healthcare students have significantly changed their food choices and eating behaviours during the course of the first wave of the pandemic. Based on these insights, an educational intervention can be designed to educate such workers on the importance of good nutrition as well as practical tips to achieve this in times of pressure. This may be evaluated using a knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) before and after design.

**Conclusion** These members of the healthcare community would benefit from micro-training emphasizing how to make simple, nutritious meals quickly, for use when external circumstances alter their habits and access to food. Furthermore, they would benefit from a comprehensive governmental occupational health strategy to optimize nutrition and pandemic resilience.

## 11 CHEFS AS AGENTS IN NUTRITION AND TRANSFORMATION OF FOOD AND HEALTH SYSTEMS: GLOBAL FRAMEWORK OF ACTIONS ON PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SOLUTIONS IN COMMUNITIES

Jaroslav Guzanic\*. *Swiss Association for Cooperation on Nutrition Education, Chefs' Manifesto, Switzerland*

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**Background** The UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) was convened by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, and held in September 2021. The purpose was to shape global commitments and to raise global awareness of food systems, how they might be transformed to reduce diet-related diseases, resolve hunger, and restore planetary health.<sup>1</sup>

**Objectives** This international survey aimed to narrow the already existing Chefs' Manifesto Action Plan (2), formed from the UN SDGs, to a much more succinct, 8 point practical action pledge, which could begin to be immediately implemented by existing and future chefs (62%), cooks (7%),

students (3%) and food professionals (24%) from more than 50 countries worldwide.

**Study Design and Methods** The aim was to conduct an analytical surveys, questionnaires and multiple global, inclusive dialogues across the culinary and food sector, the reports of which were submitted to the UN FS Summit 2021. The survey was translated into several languages, The preliminary results were published in June 2021 as part of the preparations for the 2021 UN Food Systems Pre-Summit Event.<sup>2</sup>

**Results** 38% of asked would choose ingredients for menus with the lowest impact on the environment. 31,8% use different plants, grains, and proteins to champion 'wild' variants and avoid monoculture and 27% use a purchasing power to choose only fish and seafood that is abundant and sourced sustainably. Only 13% support more farmers to access market-places through choosing to buy from small-scale producers. Using training to chefs, students was chosen by 15.8% of the respondents. Setting targets to reduce and prevent food waste was a priority of 26,9% of the asked. Being more creative through pickling, preserving, dehydrating, and freezing was a current and ongoing commitment by 11% of the survey participants. 11% would like to become a community food champion and re-distribute surplus food through community (digital) sharing. More than 24% of chefs were committed to promote kitchen gardens and urban farming. Incorporating plant-based options and proteins on menus was a priority by 41,2% of the surveyed. Finally, promoting new ideas and implemented actions through educating dinners, community and online events, annual conferences and would be welcomed by 38% of all participants.<sup>3</sup>

**Conclusion** The survey resulted in 8 practical actions that were deemed the most likely to accelerate food systems transformation. According to the last follow-up of dialogues and interviews having been conducted since June 2021, more than 82% of respondents confirmed their commitments and already implemented actions.

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## NUTRITION AND WEIGHT RELATED ISSUES IN IRISH CANCER SURVIVORS INDICATE A NEED FOR PROVISION OF NUTRITION ADVICE AND INTERVENTION FROM CREDIBLE SOURCES

<sup>1</sup>Laura Keaver\*, <sup>1</sup>Niamh O'Callaghan, <sup>2</sup>Pauline Douglas. <sup>1</sup>Institute of Technology Sligo, Sligo, Ireland; <sup>2</sup>School of Biomedical Sciences, Ulster University, Coleraine, UK

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**Background** In Ireland, continuing increases in cancer survivorship rates have placed cancer survivorship care to the forefront in terms of strategic planning and service requirements.<sup>1</sup> Nutrition is an important component of the cancer care continuum,<sup>2</sup> however despite this those with cancer report poor access to credible nutrition advice.<sup>3</sup>

**Aims** The aim of this research was to investigate 1) current nutritional issues; 2) proportion receiving nutrition advice

from a dietitian and 3) additional sources of nutrition advice.

**Methods** This cross-sectional study recruited Irish cancer survivors over the age of 18, who were not palliative and had completed active cancer treatment at least six months ago. A questionnaire on Microsoft Forms consisting of open and closed demographic, clinical and nutritional questions was developed and recruitment took place via social media platforms between October and December 2020.

**Results** Participants (n=169) were mainly female (n=145, 85.8%); diagnosed with breast cancer (n=109, 64.5%); living in the Republic of Ireland (n=154, 91.1%) and had completed active treatment in the last five years (n=101, 59.9%). The mean age was 51.4 ± 10.9 years. 3.6% were underweight and 56.5% overweight or obese. One third (n=57, 33.3%) had experienced weight gain in the previous six months, 10.1% (n=17) weight loss and 22.5% (n=38) weight fluctuations. The majority reported decreased energy levels post treatment (n=87, 51.5%) and fatigue (n=129, 76.3%). Other nutrition related impact symptoms were still present: pain (n=61, 36.1%); constipation (n=56, 33.1%); diarrhoea (n=28, 16.6%); dry mouth (n=44, 26%); no appetite (n=23, 13.6%); sore mouth (n=21, 12.4%); taste changes (n=21, 12.4%); smells bothering them (n=18, 10.7%). One-fifth (n=35, 10.7%) had access to a dietitian during treatment, only 11.8% (n=20) had access post treatment. One quarter sought advice elsewhere (n=42, 24.9%); with the main additional source of advice being online (n=16; 9.5% of total cohort).

**Conclusion** The majority of this cohort were classified as overweight or obese with one third reporting recent weight gain. This can increase risk of recurrence and decrease overall survival in those with cancer (4,5), in particular breast cancer (6,7). The majority were still experiencing fatigue, which has been shown to affect those with cancer more than any other symptom (8). The persistence of other nutrition impact symptoms could further impact quality of life. There is a clear need for the provision of nutrition advice to Irish Cancer Survivors. There is a role for all healthcare professionals to provide basic nutrition advice or signpost to evidence-based nutrition resources.

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