



CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR DIETETIC RESEARCH

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CFDR 2011 research grants: advancing nutrition and dietetic practice research

Edmonton, AB – June 16, 2011 – The Canadian Foundation for Dietetic Research (CFDR) announced today that it has approved funding of more than \$135,000 for eight research grants. Cathy Paroschy-Harris, RD, President of CFDR, says “These research projects will explore important topics in the nutrition and dietetic practice arenas and will add to the knowledge base in these areas. CFDR is proud to support such a varied array of research projects which will fill a knowledge gap and enhance dietetic practice, ultimately building a healthier Canada.”

The research projects will answer questions related to nutrition interventions for optimal health, support for vulnerable populations, new roles for dietitians, and the enhancement of dietetic practice:

Can an equation to estimate energy requirements of individuals with chronic spinal cord injury be developed?

Decreases in lean body mass and increases in fat mass often experienced by those with chronic spinal cord injury can lead to serious health problems. Hugues Plourde, Ph.D., RD, and his research team at McGill University will develop population-specific equations to accurately estimate Resting Energy Expenditure in people with chronic spinal cord injury. Estimating the energy requirements of people with spinal cord injury will help dietitians to tailor the most appropriate dietary and lifestyle intervention to prevent excess weight gain, reduce metabolic risk factors and promote overall health. The results of the proposal may extend to other individuals who suffer from immobilization due to nerve deterioration or neurological diseases.

What issues lead to weight gain in women treated with chemotherapy for early stage breast cancer?

Weight gain is a common and persistent problem for many breast cancer survivors and is associated with adverse health consequences; however relationships between the effects of treatment, dietary change and weight gain after diagnosis are poorly understood. Vivienne A. Vance, MSc., PhD (Cand) and her team from the University of Waterloo will work to gain a better appreciation of the experience of food intake and body weight over the treatment trajectory, from the perspective of women who have received chemotherapy for breast cancer. This research will help dietitians to identify dietary factors relating to energy imbalance and weight gain in the post-diagnosis period for breast cancer.

What are the challenges in training priorities in entry level food service management and administrative training within Canadian dietetic training programs?

Health care facilities' food service departments have provided opportunities for dietetic trainees to apply knowledge and develop management skills to achieve entry-level competencies. However, Canada has seen a reduction of these learning opportunities within the healthcare industry. A research team, led by Roula Tzianetas, MSc, RD of Mount Sinai Hospital, will identify current training practices and priorities in food service management and administrative training within Canadian Dietetic Training Programs. Results of this study will have important implications to dietetic practice and highlight the importance of administrative and managerial skills for entry level practitioners.

How can we facilitate the adoption of guidelines to promote healthy eating in Alberta's recreational facilities?

Although the mandate of recreational facilities is to enhance well-being, many offer foods that are not the healthiest choices. The Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth (ANGCY) promote health by ensuring children have access to healthy food choices within schools, childcare and recreational facilities. However, only 6% of recreational facilities have adopted the guidelines. Dana Olstad, MSc, RD and her research team at the University of Alberta will evaluate process and outcomes of an intervention to stimulate adoption of the ANGCY in recreational facilities. As one of the first studies in this area, findings will inform future points of intervention for dietitians seeking to improve community food environments.

Why are dietitians not applying the Nutrition Care Process model in their dietetic practice?

The Nutrition Care Process (NCP) is a systematic problem-solving method developed to improve dietary care. Dietitians have been encouraged by Dietitians of Canada to apply the NCP model, but implementation remains a challenge as it

involves learning new content and developing new skills. Sophie Desroches, Ph.D., Dt.P and her team at Laval University will apply a theory-based approach to identify the psychosocial determinants underlying the intention of dietetic internship educators, new dietetic graduates and dietetic interns to use the NCP in their practice. Results of the study will contribute to the elaboration of pre-licensure training, continuous education learning activities and interventions promoting implementation of the NCP in dietetic practice.

Should women with gestational diabetes follow a low glycemic index diet to improve the health qualities of breast milk?

Breast milk is accepted as the optimal source of nutrition for infants. Women diagnosed with gestational-hyperglycemia have decreased anti-oxidant capacity in breast milk. The research team of Thomas Wolever, DM, PhD, Shannan Grant, MSc, RD, Pauline Darling, PhD, RD and Deborah O'Connor PhD, RD from the University of Toronto hypothesize that breast milk of women with gestational-diabetes consuming a low glycemic index diet will have higher breast milk anti-oxidants than women receiving the medium-high-GI diet. This pilot may provide valuable insight into the GI-mechanism and the effect of maternal diet on breast milk anti-oxidant status.

Can the “Adaptive Mentorship[®]” model enhance preceptor supervision in dietetic internship?

Preceptors – those who train dietetic interns – receive limited formal training on how to supervise interns. The Adaptive Mentorship[®] Model is a promising supervisory model that is effective with teacher-interns and in trainees in business management. The developers of the Adaptive Mentorship[®] Model propose that it can be used by other health professionals. Natasha Haskey, MSc, RD and her team from the Saskatoon Health Region will pilot the Adaptive Mentorship[®] Model in dietetic internship. The researchers believe that such a formalized model for supervision of dietetic interns would create opportunities for consistency across preceptors, improve preceptor training and enhance preceptor/intern relationships.

How do dietitians perceive their roles in food safety?

In 2008, Canadians were stunned by an outbreak of listeriosis that resulted in premature births, serious illnesses, and the deaths of 22 people. For many dietitians, it was likely the first time they had to recall their educational training in food-borne illnesses and apply this knowledge to their practices through counselling at-risk clients, answering questions from the public, and guiding their institutions through changes in foodservice purchasing, preparation, and policy. Judy Sheeshka, PhD, RD and her research team from the University of Guelph will investigate Canadian dietitians' perceptions of their roles in food safety. This research will assist Canadian dietitians in recognizing their perceptions, practices, and evolving role related to food safety.

The Canadian Foundation for Dietetic Research was created in 1991 by Dietitians of Canada to support applied nutrition and dietetic research. Thanks to the generous support of corporate donors and individual members of Dietitians of Canada, CFDR has awarded research grants annually since 1993. To date, CFDR has funded more than 100 research teams across the country, awarding more than \$1,335,000 in grants. The CFDR research program supports the Foundation's mission: *Enhancing the health of Canadians by contributing new knowledge about food and nutrition.*

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