

## Individual Research Project Presentations Day 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024, Kent and Medway Medical School.

### Nutritional Education in Medical Curricula and Clinical Practice: A Scoping Review on the Knowledge Deficit amongst Medical Students and Doctors (MSADs)

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#### Abstract

**Background:** This scoping review critically synthesises the literature on nutrition education to understand why there is a gap in nutrition knowledge and skills among medical students and doctors (MSADs) in English-speaking countries, and the solutions which have been proposed in the literature to close this gap. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), accounting for 74% of deaths worldwide (World Health Organization, 2022), are a major health concern and are often the result of poor dietary habits. To reduce the prevalence of chronic diseases health-care professionals must encourage healthy eating, and therefore require the appropriate nutritional knowledge and skills.

**Methods:** To collect the literature this scoping review used four databases (PubMed, WebOfScience, Embase and ERIC) and grey literature sources (Google, Bing and Perplexity AI). Papers which fit the eligibility criteria were included in the analysis. Papers which did not fit the eligibility criteria were removed from the data pool. The 28 selected peer-reviewed papers were then critically appraised and relevant data was extracted. Then, they were thematically analysed using qualitative a coding software analysis tool, Delve, to help identify two principal themes and 20 sub-themes.

**Results:** The results identified four reasons for the gap in nutrition knowledge, including insufficient curriculum time dedicated to nutrition education, perceptions and confidence, stigmas and health habits, and challenges in clinical practice. The review also identified four potential solutions to minimise this gap, including curriculum changes, enforcement of standardised nutrition education guidelines, integration of nutrition in clinical practice and promotion of a multidisciplinary approach to nutrition education.

**Conclusions:** This scoping review shows that the principal and underlying reason for why there exists a gap in nutrition knowledge among MSADs is their perception of nutrition. In summary, understanding why there is a gap in nutrition knowledge among MSADs, and identifying potential solutions to close this gap, can help to increase the nutrition education received by MSADs. This would improve patient care and likely contribute to better eating habits

worldwide, thereby reducing the burden of NCDs to both patients and healthcare professionals.

**Keywords:** Medical Students | Doctors | Nutrition Knowledge

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