An innovative model to provide nutritional education and intervention for older adults in the community

Charlene E Schmidt and Diedri White
University of Tennessee - Chattanooga, USA

Dietetic students enrolled in Medical Nutrition Therapy courses during the senior year of the didactic program from spring 2013 through spring 2015 participated in various inter-professional activities along with undergraduate students from varied healthcare professions. A Health Resources and Service Administration Grant provided opportunities for students to increase understanding and direct experience in inter-professional collaboration. Activities included completion of a video-based learning module, participation in older/geriatric-focused health fairs conducted at several housing facilities, observation of “one on one” counseling with clients in their homes and in local clinics and completion of reflections about their inter-professional experiences. At the community health fairs, 36 dietetic students also worked collaboratively with graduate students from various health's related disciplines. Dietetic students observed registered dietitian/nutritionists (RDN's) providing nutrition information to residents with multiple chronic conditions such as heart failure, diabetes mellitus, osteoporosis, hyperlipidemia and hypertension. Topics of discussion and nutrition education materials focused on the dietary approaches to stop hypertension diet, fluid intake for congestive heart failure, food label reading, low sodium lifestyles/diets and bone mineral health. At the health fairs, dietetic students assisted RDN’s in presenting nutrition information to the participants by using food models, handouts, sample food labels and measuring bone mineral density with the Sahara™ Bone Sonometer. Dietetic students visited homes and clinic sites to observe the RDN performing nutrition counseling with clients. Qualitative results of the students’ reflections about experiences in these inter-professional activities and working collaboratively with students from other health care disciplines will be presented.

Biography

Charlene E Schmidt has been practicing in the clinical field of Geriatric Nutrition for 25 years and teaching in higher education for the past 14 years at the University of WI-Stevens Point and Stout. She is currently a Faculty Member of University of Tennessee Chattanooga.

Diedri White has been a registered dietitian/nutritionist (RDN) for 34 years with clinical practice experience. She holds MS in both Clinical Nutrition and Nutrition Education. Dissertation defense is scheduled, May 2015, for DrPH (Health Education) from Loma Linda University. She is the Dietetics Program Director at University of Tennessee Chattanooga.

Charlene-Schmidt@utc.edu