



The Nutrition Education Policy in Healthcare Practice (NEPHELP) Project

MNI Award 2017-2019

Project Concept Note

Background

Suboptimal nutrition management in healthcare systems is a leading cause of morbidity. This can have far reaching economic consequences in an already poorly resourced setting such as the NHS in the UK. Malnutrition costs the UK economy £13 billion annually (BAPEN, 2018).

Deficiencies in awareness, knowledge and skills can be ameliorated by appropriate education/training for the healthcare workforce. In the UK context HEE (Health Education England) is responsible for the training and education of healthcare professionals in England and it is imperative that education schemes encompass core competencies as applied to everyday practice using local available resources.

NNEdPro hosts a diversity of expertise and brings over a decade of dedicated experience in empowering healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses and dietitians) to further nutrition education. Using an implementation science approach and supported by an unrestricted educational award in 2017 from the Medical Nutrition International Industry (MNI) in conjunction with the European Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ESPEN) and its UK counterpart, the British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (BAPEN), NNEdPro has built upon previous learning since 2008 and undertaken key groundwork in designing a bespoke, potentially sustainable, cross-disciplinary educational programme on nutrition as applied to healthcare, that has also actively engage patients and carers.

To date, key stakeholders have included healthcare professionals (including doctors and dietitians) with the view to increase meaningful screening, assessment and treatment of malnutrition, manifesting in its principal forms. This project over 2017-18 has sought to lay the foundations for Nutrition Education Policy in Healthcare Practice (NEPHELP).

Aims

The current proposal aims to build upon the existing foundation of NEPHELP to:

- Quantifiably improve the knowledge, understanding and application of nutrition in a cross-section of UK doctors and other healthcare professionals;
- Create an Implementation Pathway Project (IPP) enabling decision makers to use a synthesis of tools and evidence to implement nutrition education in healthcare as a key systems improvement lever;
- To design a bespoke, sustainable, cross-disciplinary educational programmes on nutrition as applied to health, that actively engage patients and carers;
- To deliver a multidisciplinary, stepwise, blended learning focussed package targeting malnutrition in the acute hospital and community setting;
- To engage with key stakeholders including healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses, dieticians) at all stages of their training (including pre-registration); and
- To increase meaningful screening, assessment and treatment of malnutrition, for example, the use of the MUST (Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool).