
Evidence-based public health nutrition

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Nutrition plays an important role in many common and costly chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and coronary artery disease. Nevertheless, most people (of the general population) do not pay attention to this fact. This might be the case because behaviour change is a most difficult task and a positive outcome is not guaranteed. Moreover, public dispute over expert disagreements and related changes of statements and guidelines led to a general mistrust about nutrition recommendations.

In my view, many of these problems could be addressed by evidence-based nutrition research. Evidence-based nutrition already plays an important role in public health nutrition research and practice. Pressing health problems such as overweight and obesity as well as the metabolic syndrome need to be addressed in many health promotion projects and require sound nutrition knowledge to foster lasting behaviour change. The project BeKi of the German Bundesland Baden-Württemberg presented in this issue of SPM (Winkler et al. 2005) is a good example of how evidence-based nutrition can be transferred into practice by teaching evidence-based nutrition knowledge, supporting behaviour change and creating a healthy nutrition environment. Evidence-based nutrition needs to become the gold standard of public health nutrition. Sound nutrition recommendations

are still not available for many nutrition-related settings. On a national level, the integration of evidence-based nutrition knowledge in the Swiss MPH curriculum in order to strengthen the communication between all public health professionals including nutritionists is of prime importance. Only interdisciplinary team work will allow successful development of evidence-based nutrition messages tailored to specific settings, that will foster behaviour change and create healthy environments to help people integrate physical activity and healthy nutrition habits into their busy lives. Public health professionals from different disciplines need to exchange their knowledge and experiences. This exchange needs to be supported by the government and by public and private organizations working in the field of public health and nutrition. More financial resources and better coordination are needed in order to stop the epidemic of overweight and obesity. The efficacy and efficiency of many health promotion projects will largely benefit from sharing their evaluation results. Some of the workshops under "Obesity: How to prevent the global epidemic" held during the Public Health Congress 2005 in Bern (23rd to 24th of June) will be the ideal venue to do this.

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References

Winkler G, Noller B, Waibel S, Wiest M (2005). BeKi – an initiative for nutrition education in children in the federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg: description, experiences, and considerations for an evaluation framework. *Soz Präventiv Med* 50: 151–60.

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