

We believe policy-makers will look to our new association as a source of sound advice and guidance, and importantly in engaging appropriately we will show that we can help solve problems.

When I reflect back on our efforts in The Nutrition Society to develop a professional structure to support public health nutrition, I believe we were naïve and too inward-looking in our approach. Although it was important to get our own house in order, it would have been much more effective if we had engaged more actively with employers and policy leaders to help them address the problems they had, i.e. to show that the skills we had

could actually make a difference to solve real problems, and that we were not just a club to support each other to get new shiny badges that made us feel good.

2008 is going to be a crucial year for our profession: if we don't engage more fully and effectively we will have missed a vital opportunity. I have said this before, but now it really is time to get serious: all of us, not just a few.

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In this issue

Public Health Nutrition: a truly global journal

Scholarly contributions in this issue demonstrate the genuinely global reach of the journal, with authors from the West Indies, Australia, the USA, Cost Rica, the Philippines, Cuba, Chile, South Africa and Oman. They not only reflect a broad geographical representation but also a diversity of research content relevant to public health nutrition practice and research at a global level.

Starting in Australia, Cox *et al.*⁽¹⁾ present results from a cross-sectional study exploring consumers' intentions to consume various forms of omega-3 fatty acids. Using data derived from computer-administered questionnaires on a community sample of 220 consumers, they report that consumers' perceived vulnerability to coronary heart disease had no effect on acceptance of genetically modified (GM) sources of omega-3 fatty acids. This study also suggests that even after education of the benefits of using GM sources of omega-3 fatty acids, there was no change in consumers' acceptance of these product options.

Continuing with this focus on fatty acids, Beydoun *et al.*⁽²⁾ from the USA report on analysis of prospective cohort data from the Atherosclerosis Risk in Community (ARIC) study, to test a hypothesis that *n*-3 fatty acids can inhibit cognitive decline, particularly in middle-aged hypertensives. They provide evidence to support randomised control trials of diets rich in fatty acids of marine origin among this population group.

Moving east to Barbados, Gaskin *et al.*⁽³⁾ report on a cross-sectional study of 400 schoolchildren (11–16 years of age) that explores the relationship between overweight and obesity and physical activity, with perceptions of

body size, health and diet quality. They provide further evidence to support the importance of cultural factors as promoters of adiposity. Adolescents in Norway are also the focus of a study by Bere *et al.*⁽⁴⁾ that investigates the determinants of soft drink consumption in this population group. This study highlights a range of individual, socio-economic, environmental and cultural determinants of soft drink consumption that can be used to support intervention planning.

Micronutrient malnutrition continues to be a priority focus for assessment and intervention in many parts of the world. Macias-Matos *et al.*⁽⁵⁾ present results from a nationwide study of 1191 Cuban children to assess vitamin A status and intake of vitamin-A-providing foods.

Boosting nutrient intakes via food fortification and supplementation remains a major strategic approach in many parts of the world where deficiency is highly prevalent. Mardones *et al.*⁽⁶⁾ report on a non-blinded, randomised controlled study of the effects of a dairy product fortified with multiple micronutrients and omega-3 fatty acids on birth weight and gestation duration in pregnant Chilean women. Results indicate an increased mean birth weight. The effectiveness of dietary supplementation is critically dependent on compliance. Lutsey *et al.*⁽⁷⁾ explore a range of variables associated with iron supplementation compliance in a sample of 346 pregnant women in the Philippines. This work provides insights for intervention planning that enhances supplementation compliance.

Three papers in this issue focus on validation testing of dietary intake assessment tools. Marcotte *et al.*⁽⁸⁾ assess a calcium checklist for early elementary-school children,

Chinnock⁽⁹⁾ validates a diet history questionnaire for use with Costa Rican adults and Charlton *et al.*⁽¹⁰⁾ validate a short questionnaire to assess sodium intake. It seems that much of what we do in public health nutrition comes back to assessment and measurement, so these papers will no doubt be of interest.

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