

Dietitians & Nutritionists in Zimbabwe



Dietitians

- A dietitian is a professional who alters their patient's nutrition based upon their medical condition and individual needs.
- Involves comprehensive knowledge of the various nutrients and the physiological inter-relationships of these nutrients in the normal and sick individual
- Dietitians organize food and nutrition plan and promote healthy eating habits to prevent and treat illness.
- They find work in food service businesses, or working with patients in hospitals, clinics and other healthcare facilities

To be a Dietician...

- Minimum Qualification BSc Dietetics (hons) from an accredited university (none in Zimbabwe)
- 1200 clinical hours
- To practice, a dietician must be registered with the Allied Health Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe (AHPC)
- 15 registered dieticians in Zimbabwe.
- To keep practicing, a dietician must keep up to date with latest nutrition information

FIELDS OF DIETETICS

- Primary Care
- Public health issues
- National Nutrition programmes
- Legislation and Policy

COMMUNITY NUTRITION



- Tertiary/secondary care
- Clinical orientation
- Hospital setting
- Individualized Care

THERAPEUTIC NUTRITION



- Public food service units e.g. hospitals, military, schools etc
- Food Industry

FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT



Nutritionists

- A person who uses the science of nutrition to help individuals improve their health.
- To be a registered nutritionists you need have;
 - a. A four year BSc degree in Nutrition from an accredited university
 - b. Registered with Allied Health Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe
 - c. Currently 96 registered in Zimbabwe

Where can a Nutritionists work

- Health promotion and assessing, setting, implementing and communicating nutritional standards in the community
- Product development
- Regulatory support and research/science.
- Community development/health improvement as well

Dieticians vs Nutritionist

- One of the major differences is that a dietitian can help to diagnose and treat nutritional problems and prescribe therapeutic meals for the management of diseases and symptoms (Clinical Nutrition)
- Nutritionists teach the community about the general nutrition and health properties in food and offer nutrition supervision. (Community nutrition)

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Formation of Associations (DAZ and ZimNa)
- 2nd Conference DAZ 2016 ,1st ZimNa conference held 2017
- Increase of Practitioners getting registered
- Whistle blowing . There is an increase in the reporting of unregistered and unqualified Practitioners
- Finalizing code of ethical conduct , scope of practice
- Various presentations for other medical professions
- Edu Committee is working with Universities in the country to have a standardized curriculum for training of nutritionists . Also working with local universities in the introduction of a dietetics program

Challenges

- Unqualified people giving nutritional advise
- Dieticians not yet trained in Zimbabwe hence we only have 4 in our central hospitals when every hospital should have a dietician.