Curriculum renewal for public health nutrition - a national case study, Australia

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Abstract
Effective workforce preparation and continuing professional development in public health nutrition are essential to address the immense challenges facing nutrition in the world today. A national Curriculum Renewal in Public Health Nutrition project in Australia (2011/12) built on previous international work on PHN competencies and facilitated scholarly dialogue on innovative teaching and learning and curriculum mapping strategies.

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renewal, public, study, health, curriculum, nutrition, national, case, australia

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CURRICULUM RENEWAL FOR PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION – A NATIONAL CASE STUDY, AUSTRALIA

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Introduction
Effective workforce preparation and continuing professional development in public health nutrition are essential to address the immense challenges facing nutrition in the world today. A national Curriculum Renewal in Public Health Nutrition project in Australia (2011/12) built on previous international work on PHN competencies and facilitated scholarly dialogue on innovative teaching and learning and curriculum mapping strategies.

Objectives
This study aimed to stimulate curriculum renewal in public health nutrition across Australian universities.

Methods
A 2 day national Teaching and Learning Forum involved Australian universities offering PHN programs and PHN leaders in scholarly dialogue on innovative teaching, learning and curriculum mapping strategies to build Public Health Nutrition capabilities.

Results
An initial Delphi process identified ~120 competency elements as essential for the future public health nutrition workforce, categorised into 14 competency areas. The National Forum involved N = 26 universities and PHN leaders. All participants were involved in reflecting on their own learning and teaching strategies and the alignment of their curriculum to achieve the agreed PHN competencies. The framework of ‘Employability’ was applied to reflect on the preparation of graduates with the necessary generic and discipline specific capabilities to apply innovative problem solving for the complex challenges of PHN practice. Forum outcomes included a broad portfolio of teaching and learning strategies related to specific competency outcomes used by Australian academics and the identification of long term plans and barriers to curriculum renewal for individual universities.

Conclusion
Achieving improved public health nutrition outcomes requires scholarly dialogue targeted at curriculum renewal and alignment of learning and teaching strategies with development of professional competencies. PHN academics can benefit from scholarship in the education field to achieve advancements in PHN program outcomes.

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