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Abstract

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Keywords

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CHANGING HEALTH PARADIGMS – CAN THE CONCEPTS OF WELLNESS AND WELLBEING BUILD BRIDGES IN DIETARY COUNSELLING?

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Background and objectives: Delivering a client or patient-centred counselling approach is a core competency for professional practice for dietitians. This aim of this research was to explore if the concepts of wellness and wellbeing could provide useful adjuncts for this approach by building bridges between biomedical imperatives and client perspectives on health.

Methods: To explore the current professional position, a literature search was conducted using keywords encompassing patient-centred care and competency within professional dietetic journals (2001-2010). To develop a contextual case study, 10 in-depth interviews with dietitians from a dietary weight-loss trial were conducted. Recordings of their perspectives on roles, opportunities/barriers, and counselling strategies were transcribed verbatim and examined using inductive thematic and content analysis.

Results: Eleven relevant articles were incorporated into the narrative review which described issues in practice relating to traditional forms of consultation and the effectiveness of various approaches. The over-riding theme in the interviews (Professional Identity and Competency Dilemma), highlighted the tension for dietitians in their dual role as nutrition expert and counsellor, and thereby the distance between biomedical imperatives (clinical targets) and client defined perspectives on health. The supporting themes (Adherence factors and Constructs of health) exposed details on the barriers to dietary change and the impact of contextual factors on this change respectively. All of these themes related to concepts of wellness and wellbeing.

Conclusion: Appreciating the concepts of wellness and wellbeing adds a useful adjunct to client centred approaches to dietary counselling by building bridges between clinical targets and client perspectives on health.

Key words: Wellness, wellbeing, dietary practice, Patient-Centred Care.