

THE INTERCOLLEGIATE GROUP ON NUTRITION – PROGRESS REPORT

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The Intercollegiate Group on Nutrition (ICGN) was established in December 1996 with a primary aim of improving the competence in human nutrition of doctors and other health professionals. The Group now has formal representation from 11 medical Royal Colleges, together with nursing, dietetic and pharmacist representatives. It issued its first report to the parent medical Royal Colleges in July 1997, where it recommended addressing two levels of competence through intercollegiate qualifications – a Certificate in Human Nutrition which would define a minimal level of core competence in the principles of nutrition, whereas a Diploma in Clinical Nutrition would ensure possession of competence relevant to an individual's clinical practice. Since that time, the Group has been working mainly on a course to achieve the first level of core competence.

A pilot course was held at the University of Southampton in September 1998, to bring together members of the ICGN, and also some individuals who would wish to be future trainers, to help clarify content and methods of delivery. The course was also attended by an education task force, supported by Rank Prize Funds, who provide support in co-ordinating and standardising the delivery of the course. Some of the key points from this meeting included:

- Unanimous agreement of the need for such a course to complement the present level of education in human nutrition.
- Specific aims of the course will be:
 - i. To enable doctors to extend their knowledge of nutritional principles.
 - ii. To bring together sub-specialties to study nutrition in relation to disease processes and across boundaries of care.
 - iii. To encourage the application of effective nutrition in relation to the promotion of health and in the treatment of disease.
- The course design will balance nutritional concepts and supporting science with practical examples, real life experience, and cases relevant to all participants.
- Evidence-based human nutrition will provide one of several unified themes.
- The course will take place over five days, shortened on the first and last days to facilitate travel. The course will be residential, allowing time for informal interdisciplinary discussion and study.
- The most likely participants will be trainees with an interest in nutrition, usually at SpR level. In addition, some consultants and GPs who are developing a special interest in nutrition are likely to attend. The course will also be open to other professional groups with an equivalent interest and background in nutrition.

The Group held two courses in 1999, one in Glasgow on 24-28 May, and the second in Southampton on 13-17 September, both well attended by trainees and consultants. The interactive nature of the course limits the number able to attend to about 25-30.

Extensive feedback was obtained from the participants and the trainers at these two courses and this has been used to re-evaluate the course content and delivery, and modifications have been proposed for future courses. It is intended to hold a rolling programme of three to four courses each year, the basic structure and content of the course being similar at all sites throughout the UK. The number of courses will be determined partly by demand and partly by the availability of funding. A number of postgraduate deans have already recognised this course and training subcommittees are beginning to include it in training programmes. There are not, as yet, formal arrangements for an Intercollegiate qualification, but participants receive a Certificate of Attendance and, where relevant, of CPD/CME.

Three courses will be held in 2000, and further details are as follows:

Course date	Venue	Details from
3-7 April	Southampton	Janice Taylor Institute of Human Nutrition University of Southampton SO16 6YD Tel: 01703 796317 Fax: 01703 794945
22-26 May	Dunkeld	Caroline Fraser Department of Human Nutrition Yorkhill Hospitals Glasgow G3 8SJ Tel: 0141 2019264 Fax: 0141 2019275
18-22 September	Nottingham	Hazel Binks School of Biomedical Sciences Queen's Medical Centre Nottingham NG7 2UH Tel: 0115 970 9478 Fax: 0115 970 9259

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