

# **Integration of Health Promotion into Community Nutrition in Japan: Past, Present and Future**

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## **1. Beginning**

The first dietitian started to work in 1926, when it was 55 years later, the modern nutrition science was introduced to our country in 1871. In 1937, community nutritionists (dietitians) started to work at public health center for the prevention of tuberculosis under the public health center law.

In 1945, community nutritionists (dietitians) were expected to work in all part of Japan. Because of food shortage after World War II, our country imported the foods from other countries to solve the malnutrition, and then dietitians provided nutrition education to people for effective food utilization. Mainly flour and skimmed milk imported from the United State were distributed to the school lunch program and food service in hospitals.

At the same time, a large number of dietitians were trained to encourage the people to adapt western style dietary habits. The malnutrition problem in postwar was solved by improving the nutritional state of all the people equally in a short term. The community dietitians took a very important role.

In fact, the initial issue of the community nutrition in our country was nutrition deficiency, and the purpose of community dietitian's work was nutrition education to people for effective food utilization.

## **2. From the past three decades to the present**

After solved the malnutrition problem in 1960's, dietitians faced a public opinion of which the dietitians were no longer necessary in public health. The Ministry of Health and Welfare discussed the dietitian qualification system to changing national qualification system to a private qualification. However, this matter was obstructed by Japan Dietetic Association conducting a protest movement.

Issues of western style dietary habit have been brought since in 1980's as overeating and obesity have been considered as nation's health problems. In the 1990's, the prevention and treatment of lifestyle-related diseases such as the diabetic, hyperlipidemia, hypertension and arteriosclerosis became a key objective for the nation.

On the other hand, hospital malnutrition occurred in hospitals and nursing home, even though dietitians in these institutions provided meal plans. It was known that it was impossible to prevent the hospital malnutrition with only managing food service by

dietitians. Therefore, nutrition care and management system have been needed to improve nutritional state of patients and elderly people. The dietitians in clinical field have been expected to take an important role.

In addition, shortening of the hospitalized period was done in the policy as a reducing the expense of medical treatment and nursing. As a result, the inducement policy to the home medical care and home nursing care was done, and then a lot of patients back to their community.

The role of community nutrition is not only the health promotion and the disease prevention, but also clinical nutrition management. As for the community nutrition policy, the public health, the medical treatment, and welfare forced to cooperate.

In 1999, the Ministry of Health and Welfare started up "Advisory committee future state of nutrition in the 21st century" which had a wide-ranging discussion for one year.

This report pointed out the necessity to shift from food nutrition to human nutrition in the nutrition study for the prevention of the life style-related disease and new type malnutrition, and the necessity to train the dietitians to be able to work based on human nutrition in the community and clinical fields.

In 2000, Dietitian' Law was revised. Registered dietitians (管理栄養士) are defined:

- As nutrition professionals graduated from university in nutrition science.
- Providing the nutrition management including nutrition education and nutrition support to sick and wounded people.

In 2002, new education and training programs started.

In 2006, new registered dietitian will start working on nutrition practice.

The new education and training programs are organized:

- Basic subjects
- Applied and practical subjects:
  - 1) Nutrition education
  - 2) Public health nutrition
  - 3) Clinical nutrition
  - 4) Food service Management

The medical science and clinical nutrition is getting important, and it is cleared that registered dietitians are not to be educated based on home-economics or agriculture science but rather educated and trained to be professionals for fields of public health, medical and welfare.

Education objectives for students.

- Developing following skills for people who need nutrition management:
  - 1) Nutrition Assessment
  - 2) Nutrition Caring Planning

- 3) Nutrition Intervention (nutrition education and the nutrition support)
- 4) Nutrition Monitoring
- 5) Evaluation

### 3. In the future

In our country, we faced the issues on aging society with falling birthrate, so the control policy of the medical treatment expense and the nursing expense becomes a serious problem.

This July, the national nursing insurance system taking effect from 2000 was revised. The new insurance system will be implemented in October this year. The nutrition care management is newly established in the national insurance system as a new provision, and is applied to full coverage, although residents in the nursing home have to pay their own meal expenses. Registered dietitians must provide Nutrition Assessment, Nutrition Care Plan and Nutrition Monitoring for individuals for the coverage by insurance.

A main purpose of the new provision is to solve elderly people with malnutrition, which is 30~40% in them. For registered dietitian, it is very important point that the role change to clinical service based on "human nutrition from food service at kitchen. At present time, Japan Dietetic Association trains ardently the registered dietitians to take responsibility for the nutrition care management, because of this insurance system take effect from this October. All registered dietitians in about 12,000 welfare institutions should become to be able to manage clinical nutrition care.

This revision will influence medical insurance system to which the revision will schedule next April. In the medical institutions, such a sudden change will happen, 2-3 times as mass as the welfare institutions.

On the other hand, government settled on "Healthy Japan 21" as preventive policy of the lifestyle-related disease in 2000. "Healthy Japan 21" is making 9 fields as an important field in the public health and medical.

- 1) Nutrition and eating habits
- 2) Body activity and exercise
- 3) Health care of the rest and the mind
- 4) Cigarette
- 5) Alcohol
- 6) Health care of teeth
- 7) Diabetic
- 8) Circulation disease
- 9) Cancer

Nutrition and eating habits are arranged to three stages .

- 1) State of nutrition and nutrient (food) intake level
- 2) Knowledge, an attitude, an practice level

3) Environmental level.

"Healthy Japan 21" campaign was begun in 2000, and objective values after 10 years were set. On the other hand, the government aim to advance "Healthy Japan 21" more realistically for the prevention of the lifestyle-related disease in community nutrition.

Last year, the middle survey for the effectiveness of the campaign was conducted, but it was not good result as expected. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare focused on important items, and then made the "Japanese Food Guide Spinning Top (ST) (figure-1)" for practical and easy to improve eating habits. The dietitians are in the process of developing new nutrition education using this tool.

Meanwhile, the new nursing insurance system for the prevention of bedridden elderly people will take effect from next April. The idea, the nursing prevention, will influence not only nursing insurance, but also medical insurance in the future. It is easily predictable that it is effective and more economical to spend manpower and money for the prevention or intervention by registered dietitians as much as possible to the illness and nursing at the early stage. The nutritionists and dietitians should accumulate the evidence and emphasis on the necessity to work as co-medical and the prevention team staff in the future.

Japan Dietetic Association makes "the prevention of diabetic and senior citizen's malnutrition" for emphasis item in this year. The Nutrition Car Station is being founded in the community, and it makes the base of the practice of nutrition and dietetics now.

## 食事バランスガイド (コマ)

### Japanese Food Guide Spinning Top (ST)

Do you have a well-balanced diet?

