

Dieticians in research / British Dietetic Association.

Contributors

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DIETITIANS IN RESEARCH



The British Dietetic Association

Daimler House,
Paradise Circus Queensway,
Birmingham, B1 2BJ.

Dietitians are increasingly undertaking research, either initiated by themselves, clinicians, paramedical colleagues or other research workers. To achieve credibility, the profession must establish a sound scientific basis for dietetic practice. For those involved in this type of work the Metabolic and Research Group provides encouragement and a forum for exchange of ideas.

Dietitians use precise dietary measurements

- for the diagnosis of disease;
- in studying the relationship between diet and disease;
- to control the dietary variable when studying other psychological states;
- in monitoring the effectiveness of treatments;
- in evaluating nutrition promotion programmes and the development of the dietetic profession.

METABOLIC AND RESEARCH DIETITIANS work in the following areas:

1. Hospitals

As part of a team, working with doctors, biochemists, physicists, pharmacists and nursing staff.

This includes:

- (a) interpreting the required protocol into a dietary regime suitable to the patient;
- (b) calculating the nutritional content of dietary regimes and enlisting patient co-operation in all aspects of their diet;
- (c) training and supervising ancillary staff in the precise methods of food preparation required;

- (d) advising patients regarding any therapeutic diet which they may require before or after the study;
- (e) designing test meals for diagnostic tests or for particular research requirements;
- (f) liaising with other members of the team regarding analysis and interpretation of results, and involvement with subsequent publications;
- (g) lecturing to paramedical, nursing and medical staff.

2. Research and Epidemiology Units:

As a member of a research team. This work includes:

- (a) carrying out literature searches;
- (b) designing research protocols, including the dietary regimes to test hypotheses;
- (c) using a wide range of dietary methods to obtain the required information, either in individuals or in studying the association between diet and disease in larger populations, and evaluating the success of health promotion campaigns;
- (d) training other staff in these dietary methods to ensure precision and reproductibility;
- (e) making anthropometric biochemical and statistical analyses as required;
- (f) publishing results in scientific journals and presenting work at National and International meetings;
- (g) refereeing other authors' work for scientific journals;
- (h) lecturing and supervising of dietetic and other students.

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