

Florence ROSSI



Je suis diététicienne!

I obtained a dietetic diploma in 1983 and had the opportunity to work in a public hospital. I first practiced as a dietitian for more than 15 years in the diabetic department where I was specialized in diabetic nutrition and therapeutic education of patients. Then, I wished to improve my professional competences. In France the only professional promotion for a clinical dietitian is to become a "Health Manager" (Cadre de Santé), then a "Senior Health Manager" (Cadre Supérieur de Santé) and since 2002 a higher position "Director of Care" (Directeur des Soins) has been created. Therefore, I pursued my professional planning to a higher level. I attended a one year training course in a Health Manager Institution, then a "Management in sanitary and social organization", and finally a "Master 2 of Economy and Management of health and social welfare systems." Today I am a Senior Health Executive Manager. My mission is to manage several dietetic units of the Hospitals of Marseille. At the same time, I was the president of the French association of the nutritionist dietitians (AFDN) from 2004 to 2008, and I also participated in the promotion of the dietetic profession and the recognition of dietetic care values in the AFDN, formerly the Association of the dietitians of French speaking language (ADLF).

In France, dietetics is a relatively young field. The first dietitians graduated at the beginning of the 50s. For half of a century this profession was practiced without clear legal boundaries since only the job title was officially recognised. On 30 January 2007 a law was passed so that the profession of dietitian is officially recognized as a health profession and registered in the Code of Public Health (definition of the profession and its legal exercise, creation of the "Dietetic National Diploma")

Today, two dietetic diplomas are available from two programs: "Dietetic BTS" and "Dietetic DUT", they both are two year programs. The teaching is not only based on practical knowledge but also has a strong scientific base. This is why it is often completed by DU (Diploma of University) in a faculty of medicine or biology. In the near future, by an engagement of these two programmes, a unique education programme (one formatted education, one specific profession) will be integrated into a "LMD" system ("License", "Master", "Doctorate") and create a "Dietetic National Diploma" (Bachelor level)

In France, dietitians mainly work in the health field, 80 % of them as employees for food-service facilities. The others work in increasing numbers as freelancers. At this moment, according to the national census, there are 6100 dietitians listed and working in different fields: 55 % in health facilities, 25% in collective restaurant, research, industrial communication sector, 20% as freelance. Agrico-food industries and pharmaceutical industries also employs dietitians who have completed a diploma of "Master 2" or "Doctorate". Because of the increasing awareness of the relationship between health and alimentation and the increasing number of nutrition-related pathologies, the need of nutrition specialists keeps on growing years on year. Since 2001, France has been one of the first European countries to implement a national nutrition and health plan ("PNNS": le Programme National Nutrition Santé), and has proclaimed nutrition as a major factor of public health. The "PNNS" program has a goal of improving the population's health through nutrition by 2010. In order to achieve this goal dietitians are regarded as essential health professionals who can take care of nutritional problems.