

## Dietetikus vagyok!

### I'm a dietitian!

The highest qualified professionals of dietotherapy are the dietitians in Hungary. I have graduated as a dietitian (BSc) in 2006 at the University of Pécs Faculty of Health Sciences and since then I am working at the Department of Nutritional Sciences and Dietetics as an assistant lecturer. The dietetic teachers have a special position in Hungary, because the students visit the clinical placements under their supervision, before they were put under the placement trainers care. By this means, that the dietetic teachers at the Universities have the opportunity to practice their profession. Only the last semester is spent away from the campus by the students at different clinical wards. In Hungary only those are allowed to work in the Higher Education who have a 3rd level qualification or are at least PhD students. This was a huge expectation from the dietetic teachers, because there weren't any possibilities to get a Master degree from Dietetics or Human nutrition in the past. Dietetic teaching at BSc level exists from 1975 in Budapest, and from 1990 also in Pécs. The education lasted for 3 years at the beginning, but soon it has grown to 4 years. It is planned to start with the first Masters in Human nutrition in 2009, previously dietitians could achieve 2nd level for example in Sociology or in Engineering (I belong to engineers too). Related to the education of dietitians we can also tell, that the leadership was in the hands of physicians until present days, the profession is only taking over the leading role on itself nowadays.

The Hungarian Dietetic Association exists from 1991, and it is a member of EFAD from



There are approximately 1300 dietitians in Hungary, and the population of the country is a little bit more than 10 million. The most important ethnic minority is Romany, and there are considerable German descents in some regions of the country too, but in general Hungarian dietitians do not have language difficulties in the course of working, and do not have to challenge eating habits coming from different cultural background.

The average patient number per clinical dietitian is 167, and it is decreasing, but this is more due to the reduction of number of beds, because unfortunately the number of dietetic students is also decreasing from year to year. Of course there are extreme institutes, for example a private hospital with 20 patients per dietitian, and a public hospital with 556. In 90% of the institutes there exists dietetic counseling, but only in 54% of the cases is it led by a qualified dietitian, on the rest the doctor or the nurse carries out this task. Dietitians working for governmental institutes have in 67% of the cases a computer as a help in their work, but usually 3-4 dietitians are working on the same computer. In most of the institutes it is obligatory to keep a dietetic documentation, but a report from the activity is expected in less than half of the institutes.

The dietitians being active in Hungary are primarily clinical dietitians, working on clinical wards, and at many places also

involved in specialist's consultations, mainly in Diabetology and Nephrology. We do not have unified written patient's guides, at many places the dietitians use the materials from pharmaceutical works, and unfortunately in 40% of the cases this is the only guidance the patient receives.

Recent days the hospitals leases the caterings to entrepreneurs, now more than 1/5 of the catering services is led by them. This means also that more and more dietitians are working for an entrepreneur in an administrative role, and less dietitian stay at clinical work.

For freelancers service there is effective demand only in Budapest. Dietitians in Hungary are not allowed to contract with Hungary's Health Insurance Fund, through this there is no way to develop a dietetic network with country-wide coverage.

To stay competent in our profession, dietitians have to register at the Office of Health Authorisation and Administrative Procedures, where we can get a license to practice, then we have to collect credit points at the Institute for Basic and Continuing Education of Health Workers in 5 years 100. If somebody is doing professional work, it worth 15 points for a year, this means that only 25 points should be acquired from further education in a year, which can be obtained in 5 days.

The leaders of the profession are now focusing on working out the dietetic protocols, expenditure-codes, and to establish an independent professional

board and supervision. It is apparent that dietetics is characterized professional in Hungary, though everyday work contains many difficulties, which are waiting for solution. Thanks to the many resolute leaders of the profession, we are making great strides to serve the health of the population better.

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