Integration of Nutrition Education in Medical Schools (NEMS) in Germany - An initiative by young, interdisciplinary and inter-professional healthcare representatives

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Description of the initiative

- **Background/context:** As enshrined in the Vienna Declaration, nutritional care is a human right. According to the Council of Europe, healthcare professionals involved in the nutritional care of patients should possess basic knowledge of nutrition and competence in applying appropriate nutrition strategies in different clinical contexts. Additionally, the 2024 Nutrition Strategy of the German Federal Government emphasizes the integration of nutrition and the prevention of nutrition-related diseases into medical education.
- **Rationale for the initiative:** Despite increasing awareness, nutrition education has not yet been implemented in medical schools in Germany. To address this gap, an initiative by young, interdisciplinary, and interprofessional healthcare representatives is organizing an online lecture series (entitled *EAT*), which is running in the fifth edition in summer 2025. In addition, the initiative recently developed a model curriculum with national societies for clinical nutrition and existing academic chairs in Germany (publication in press), aiming to support faculties in the curricular integration of nutritional education.
- **Objectives and scope:** The overarching goal of this innovative concept is to facilitate the nationwide integration of nutrition education in medical schools (NEMS) into undergraduate medical training in Germany. This will be achieved through a multi-modal approach that builds on existing concepts – such as the EAT lecture series and the model curriculum – while also developing new teaching tools, services, and didactic formats, including digital applications and flipped classroom models. The proposed concept aligned with the framework of the NEMS initiative as outlined by the European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN).

Planned activities & deliverables

- **Project management and implementation steps:** The model curriculum will serve as a robust foundation to guide medical faculties in Germany in integrating nutrition education into undergraduate medical training. To support practical application of the model curriculum, a set of supporting materials and services will be developed. These include the provision of an online lecture series, the creation of standardized slide kits, and procuring lecturers. This approach will initially be piloted and evaluated at a selected medical faculty. Based on the outcomes, the materials and methodology will be refined prior to a broader roll-out to additional institutions.
- **Concrete deliverables:** The project will deliver a comprehensive package of teaching resources and implementation support services designed to enable medical faculties to adopt and apply the model curriculum on nutrition education.
- **Achievements within 12 and 24 months:** In the first 12 months, core support materials and services will be finalized, specifically tailored to faculties lacking in-house expertise in nutrition. The multi-modal implementation strategy will be piloted and evaluated in at least one medical faculty. Results will inform iterative improvements. Within 24 months, the revised multi-modal approach will be proposed to all medical faculties in Germany, accompanied by recommendations for integrating the model curriculum into existing structures. The long-term goal is to promote the systemic and sustainable inclusion of nutrition education in undergraduate medical training on a nationwide level.

Resources & enablers

- Funding is essential for the coordination, administration, and overall management of the project, in particular, personnel resources to develop teaching materials, expand the online lectures serious, and procure lecturers.
- The grant will be used to cover these expenses; no other funding has been secured for the project.
- The cooperation of all parties involved, i.e. project team and associated members, chairs/medical faculties, medical nutrition societies, and policy makers will make the project successful.

Results/outcomes & expected impact

- As a result of this project, the integration of nutrition education in medical faculties in Germany will be facilitated; the progress will be continuously monitored through regular feedback mechanisms.
- The innovative aspect of the project is the multi-modal approach to support medical faculties by integrating nutrition education in medical schools on a nationwide basis in Germany.
- The project will strengthen the awareness for the necessity to integrate NEMS, to strengthen the collaboration between physicians and nutritionists, to improve nutritional care as an interprofessional and interdisciplinary team approach, and thereby, to improve patient health. This in turn may influence national nutrition policy.
- The multi-modal approach proposed with this initiative is transferable to other settings and countries.

X **Please tick to confirm the PEN letter of endorsement is attached.**
Incomplete submissions will not be considered.