The link between dietary intake and noncommunicable chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and cardiovascular disease are well established (Murray, Phil, and Lopez, 2013). The most recent scientific report from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans Advisory Panel reported a multitude of opportunities to improve health through dietary patterns (USDA, 2015). Many health organizations, including the American Heart Association and the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, have recently updated their dietary guidelines and recommendations to reflect this current knowledge.

Nursing faculty have a unique opportunity to begin to incorporate clinical nutrition education in a way that can offer students realistic opportunities to impact health through dietary interventions. While some medical schools have been doing this for quite some time, there are ample reasons for nursing schools to incorporate similar content as well. This presentation will not only describe the current literature related to the links between noncommunicable chronic disease and dietary patterns but will also offer multiple resources for faculty teaching clinical nutrition to utilize. While basic nutrition that describes micro and macronutrients still has a place within the nursing curriculum, much more nutritional content is necessary to enable the nursing student to be able to elicit substantial changes in dietary intake in ways that have the potential to improve the short and long-term health of their clients.

In one large university setting, three different types of clinical nutrition educational activities were offered to last semester BSN students. In the first scenario, each of ten students was given a scenario in which they were told that they had just returned from their provider’s office and had been given a medical diagnosis in which the primary interventions were lifestyle-related to include dietary changes. These students then had the opportunity to choose their lunch from a menu with a vast variety of food options after being reminded about the appointment and new diagnosis. After dining, the students discussed how they made their lunch food choices and whether or not their recent diagnosis had any effect on their choices.

The second and third clinical nutrition educational activities included the preparation of a whole-food plant-based meal. The second group was asked to choose multiple recipes that they were interested in trying and then the faculty member assisted them in the preparation of the meal. With the third group, a shortage of monetary resources and time were added to the scenario. The students were able to calculate the costs of the healthy meals that they consumed and were able to identify easy to make, inexpensive healthy food options.

Nurses on the frontline of healthcare have an abundance of opportunities to apply evidence-based clinical nutrition practices. Multiple types of interdisciplinary education can be replicated that will teach nursing students the necessary components of dietary patterns and interventions that promote healing and health. This presentation will offer ideas and resources that may be helpful to incorporate this evidence-based clinical nutrition content into nursing education.
Abstract Summary:
This education activity will discuss the integration of culinary medicine into the nursing curriculum as a means to expose undergraduate and graduate students to evidence-based therapeutic lifestyle changes.

Content Outline:
I. Introduction - The link between dietary intake and noncommunicable chronic diseases (Murray, Phil, & Lopez, 2013)

II. The urgent need for interdisciplinary opportunities in clinical nutritional education (DiMaria-Ghalili et al., 2014)

III. Evidence and recommendations nurses can utilize regarding dietary choices to improve health care outcomes (USDA, 2015)

IV. Integrating therapeutic nutritional interventions into nursing clinical education and practice

A. Exemplars
a. Plant based nutrition program in the clinical setting (Evans et al, 2017)

b. LMED’s collaborations (LMED, 2018)
c. Nursing clinical site experiences - restaurant options, cooking immersions, and social determinants of food demonstration

B. Resources for faculty

V. Conclusion - Future opportunities in clinical nutrition education

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