Dr Cynthia Formosa, Publication in Journal of Diabetes Nursing

Dr Cynthia’s paper 'Rethinking Diabetes Education' has just been published in the Journal of Diabetes Nursing.

Abstract: One of the core components of diabetes care is the promotion of diabetes education for diabetes prevention, management and treatment to try to reduce the financial and personal burden which this condition poses on any country. However, several studies have shown that education and improved knowledge alone do not always translate into improved metabolic outcomes. In light of these findings a fuller understanding of the factors that contribute to suboptimal self-management is important if improved diabetes outcomes are to be achieved.
In this article the authors question the current approaches to diabetes education. The aim of this article is to highlight how diabetes education might be broadened in scope to become more effective in its outcomes in today’s complex environment and cultural diversities. The authors suggest that the time has come to move away from traditional didactic diabetes-related education which has failed in a number of settings to translate into improved metabolic outcomes and improved quality of life. Innovative approaches that are person-centred have more chances of success.

Authors: Dr Cynthia Formosa, Dr Anne Mandy, Mr Alistair McInnes.

Publication of Paper by Dr Donia Baldacchino, Department of Nursing


ABSTRACT: This descriptive exploratory study explored illness appraisal and spiritual coping of three groups of individuals with life-threatening illness. These were hospice clients with cancer (Ca; n = 10), clients with first myocardial infarction (MI: n = 6), and parents of children with cystic fibrosis (CF: n =16). Qualitative data were collected by audio-taped face-to-face interviews (parents) and focus groups (MI and Ca). Similarities in illness appraisal and spiritual coping were found across the three groups except appreciation of crafts, which was found only in clients with Ca and causal meaning of parents (CF). Overall, illness was appraised negatively and positively, whereas spiritual coping incorporated existential and religious coping. These findings confirm the psychological theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and theological theory (Otto, 1950), which guided this study. Recommendations were proposed to integrate spirituality and religiosity in the curricula, clinical practice and to conduct cross-cultural comparative longitudinal research.

Publication by Dr Carmel Caruana, Medical Physics Unit, FHS: The On-going Crisis in Medical Device Education for Healthcare Professionals: Breaking the Vicious Circle through Online Learning

ABSTRACT: A well-documented issue in healthcare is the unsatisfactory level of competence in the effective and safe use of medical devices among practicing healthcare professionals. The
roots of the problem lie in the fact that medical devices are developing at a much faster rate than the requisite educational provision. As a result, undergraduate healthcare students carry out their medical device training under the supervision of practitioners-trainers who are themselves not sufficiently competent, creating a vicious circle where lack of competence breeds further incompetence. This circle can only be broken if the practitioner-trainers themselves are educated. However, owing to clinical workload the latter often cannot attend face-to-face educational programs. The problem can be resolved through online learning. This article expounds on the issue and describes an online programme by which the present author is attempting to address the problem.


ABSTRACT: The growth dynamics of Listeria monocytogenes strains isolated from salmon or a salmon processing environment and two reference Listeria innocua strains were investigated at refrigerated and close-to-optimal growth temperatures. Estimates for the growth rates and the lag-phase duration at 4, 8, 12, and 30°C were obtained for optical density measurements by using different growth parameter estimation methods, i.e., the serial dilution (SD) method and the relative rate to detection (RRD) method. Both single L. innocua and L. monocytogenes strains and mixtures of L. monocytogenes strains (cocktails) were studied. Both methods show an increase in maximum growth rate (mmax) of Listeria with increasing temperatures. Generally, single-strain growth rate estimates were quite similar for both species, although L. monocytogenes showed slightly higher mmax estimates at 4°C. The SD method gave the highest estimates for the growth rate, i.e., the estimates from the RRD method were 10 to 20% lower. This should lead to caution when using the latter method for Listeria, particularly at lower temperatures. Overall, the SD method is preferred as this method yields mmax estimates close to the biological value and provides estimates for the duration of lag time (l). For discrimination between different strains, l appeared to be a more suitable parameter than mmax. This effect was most prominent for L. innocua. Significant differences were observed between mmax and/or l of L. monocytogenes cocktails and single strains at all temperatures investigated. At 4°C, the average growth rate of cocktails was higher than that of single strains. At 8 and 30°C, this trend was reversed. The average l of single strains were more than twice as long as those of cocktails at 4°C. At 8 and 30°C, the l of cocktails were significantly slower than those of single strains, but the variation was considerably less and the differences were less pronounced.
The Malta Career Guidance Association (MCGA) organised a training event for career guidance practitioners focusing on Health Care and related services. As one of the leading trainer of Health Services Industry, the Faculty was represented by Ms Claire Sillato Copperstone where she gave a presentation on the Department of Food Studies & Environmental Health, covering, inter alia, the following topics:

- different areas of specialisation offered by the department;
- what aptitude and skills are required for the different jobs;
- work ethics;
- why should youths aspire to work in such a sector;
- lifelong learning and career prospects.

The target audience were guidance teachers, trainee career advisors, college career advisors and school counsellors who work with students in schools offering compulsory education, ETC employment advisors, MCAST career advisors as well as people from recruitment agencies.

The Training event was held at Europa House, St. Paul Street, Valletta.

Dr Sandra Buttigieg has attended the EHMA Annual Conference ‘Public Health Care: Who pays, who provides?’ between the 12th and 19th June, 2012 in Bern, Switzerland. Details of the session chaired by Dr Buttigieg are available on: http://www.ehma.org/files/PS%20Involving%20citizens.pdf

During the conference Dr Buttigieg participated:

- in the Special Interest Group as a referent and presented ‘Benchmarking and Performance Management in Health Care’;
• gave an oral presentation in the Special Interest Group entitled ‘The Application of logical framework technique as quality management tool across diverse settings in a tertiary care hospital in Malta’.

Dr Sandra Buttigieg also represented Malta in the PATH WHO Project meeting ‘Performance Assessment Tool for Quality Improvement in Hospitals’.

NEW RECRUITS

Ms Marion Cutajar, Main Office

Ms Marion Cutajar, Clerk, has joined FHS in April, 2012.

Marion can be contacted on Tel: 23401912; Email: marion.cutajar@um.edu.mt.

Ms Marika Spagnol, Nursing Department

Ms Marika Spagnol, clerk, has joined FHS in July.

Marika can be contacted on Tel: 23401151; Email: marika.spagnol@um.edu.mt.

PAST EVENTS

End of Academic BBQ Friday 13th July, 2012

The end of year BBQ, held at Tigne Beach Club on Friday 13 July was once again a huge success. A good number of administrative and academic members of staff attended.

Special thanks go to Ms Doris Briffa (Dean’s Office) who organised the BBQ.
FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Discover University Open Week 2012

The University will be organising Discovery University Week between the 5th and 9th November 2012 and the Faculty of Health Sciences will be participating by opening its state-of-the-art Laboratory to the general public.

There will be two visits at 9.00 and 11.00 hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Our laboratory Officer Mr Joe Mark Gatt will show the Lab while the academic staff will be on site to give information and details on the various equipment and course information. Prior to the tour, a power point presentation on the Faculty will be given to visitors.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr Helen Grech, Oration, Graduation ceremony 2012

Dr Helen Grech, Deputy Dean and Head of Communication Therapy Department has been invited by Senate to deliver an oration at the forthcoming undergraduate ceremony in 2012.

Dr Grech academic oration will be posted in our newsletter after the ceremony.