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Introduction

During the past recent decades, nutritional sciences have gained noteworthy attention considering the rising trend of non-contagious diseases and pivotal role of nutrition in their occurrence. Furthermore, healthcare centers are greatly concerned with the health issues associated with the excessive weight gain and weight loss- malnutrition and obesity.

Despite noticeable advancement in medicine in Iran, progress is yet to be achieved in the fields of basic sciences and nutrition. This goal could only be attained by the group endeavor and unwavering support of the authorities at the ministry of health, universities and faculties. Evidently, the foremost part of the budget and attention must be allocated and invested in the primary-level prevention of diseases, which will naturally take time to accomplish.

By God's grace and with the efforts of four young medical practitioners and experts in nutritional sciences graduated from the creditable universities of the United Kingdom, this task has been fulfilled by Mashhad University of Medical Sciences through proper planning. The following collection consists of a 20-year plan, designed by the department of nutritional sciences for educational, research and healthcare purposes.

Background

Foundation of the Nutrition Department in Mashhad University of Medical Sciences

considering the immigration of nutrition students from abroad, the department of nutrition was founded in 2006 titled as the "Department of Biochemistry and Nutrition", separated as a sub-branch of the biophysics department. Initially, the only nutritionist faculty member of the department was Dr. Safarian, a medical practitioner graduated from the United Kingdom, who was proceeded by Dr. Majid Ghayour, a medical practitioner graduated from the University of Surrey, the United Kingdom (2005). The faculty board of the newly-founded department was expanded with Dr. Mohsen Nemati, medical practitioner graduated from the Imperial College London, followed by the joining of Dr. Norouzi, graduated from the University of London in 2007.

With the efforts of the faculty board and support of the other academic members, the first agreement was reached on the approval of student admissions for the postgraduate (master's) degree in the Nutritional Sciences in 2008. During 2015, the seventh class of master's degree students of nutritional sciences started their education at this department.

In 2010, the department of nutritional sciences was separated from the biochemistry and nutrition department and began offering educational courses independently. As the first head of the Nutritional Sciences department, Dr. Mohsen Nemati was in charge of the educational board at the time.

Considering the successful performance of the department in educating three consecutive periods of master's degree student training, as well as the active pursuit of the department and faculty members during the presidency of Dr. Safarian as the second head of the department, the educational license for offering PhD courses was granted to the department of nutrition by the ministry in February 2013. The fourth period of doctoral courses in nutritional sciences began in February 2016. Moreover, Dr. Hashemi, graduated from Urmia University, honored the nutritional sciences department by joining the faculty board in 2015.

With the endeavors of the faculty members and support of the medical university, agreement was reached on the admission of students for the postgraduate (master's degree) courses in the field of health and food safety in 2016. In the same year, the first class of master's degree in health and food safety were admitted at the university.

Objectives and Perspectives

-Devising a coherent, community-based educational curriculum in accordance with the national culture and development in order to:

1. Operate and apply nutritional sciences (from the cells to the community) and expand the administrative and service skills of the graduates in this major.

2. Adopt a cross-sectoral approach in nutrition and development by considering nutritional sciences as a basic human right in the proper design and effectual, cooperative management in the related programs.

3. Provide research and education with the purpose of achieving food safety and improving the quality of life in the community.

-Determining research priorities and short-term, midterm and long-term policies in the field of food and nutritional sciences.

-Offering specialized consultation to the national organizations, as well as monitoring and evaluation of nutritional status in the community.

-Promoting research and science for the students and experts of nutritional sciences in various levels and creating optimization mechanisms to overcome the obstacles in research and education.

-Designing and managing the related programs focusing on food and nutritional sciences and providing efficient, moderate services in this regard.

-Developing and applying the bottom-up (cooperative) approach in the management of food and nutrition programs.

-Creating and executing an integrated, cross-sectoral approach in the education, research and apprenticeship of food and nutritional sciences.

-Creating coordination of research and educational activities and adjustment of educational programs for nutritional sciences training.

-Assessing research projects and their proposal to the education-research section of the faculty.

-Performing targeted educational-research efforts by the faculty members in order to obtain higher rankings in international universities.