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Training Interns in Nutrition and Dietetics: Barriers and Motivators to Being a Preceptor

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Training Interns in Nutrition and Dietetics: Barriers and Motivators to Being a Preceptor

Abstract

Objectives Identify the perceptions and attitudes associated with the preceptor role and incentives that might encourage precepting among nutrition and dietetics professionals in the United States.

Methods A random sample of RDN and NDTR professionals from the Commission on Dietetic Registration credentialed practitioner database were invited to complete an online survey about knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the preceptor role. The survey was adapted from previous published instruments and validated via external content review, pretesting and post-test evaluation with pilot respondents.

Results A total of 311 of 2464 invited eligible participants completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 12.6%. The majority of the sample was white, non-Hispanic with an average age of 44 years. More participants had never served as a preceptor (41%) compared to those that were current preceptors (38%) or former preceptors (21%). Respondents were asked what types of incentives would encourage them to continue to train interns or to consider precepting. The top incentives for all participants were the opportunity to earn continuing education units (65.9%) and having expenses paid to attend a national conference (49.5%). Significantly more ($P < .001$) former preceptors and those that never precepted reported the ability to choose when to take an intern, training on how to teach and communicate with interns and access to an “on-call” specialist for help or assistance with issues when they arise as incentives compared to current preceptors. Significantly more ($P < .01$) participants who have never precepted reported training on the internship expectations and the ability to provide input on intern selection process were incentives compared to current or former preceptors.

Conclusions Incentives to serve as a preceptor differ based on current, former or never served as a preceptor status. Our results suggest promoting and strategizing solutions to the current imbalance between dietetic internship applicants and qualified preceptors should be targeted based on current, former or never precepted status in order to retain current preceptors, encourage former preceptors to return to precepting and recruit professionals that have never served as preceptors.

Disciplines

Food Biotechnology | Food Chemistry | Food Processing | Food Science | Human and Clinical Nutrition | Molecular, Genetic, and Biochemical Nutrition

Comments

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