

The Ontario Public Does Not Understand the Difference Between Registered Dietitians and Unregulated “Nutritionists”: Results from a Cross-Sectional Mixed Methods Study

La population ontarienne ne comprend pas la différence entre diététiste autorisé et « nutritionniste » non réglementé : Résultats d’une étude transversale mixte

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Appendix 1.

Survey distribution and data collection locations

Online	In-person
<p>Facebook pages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ontario Healthy Study 2. Free Food London Ontario 3. Munsee-Delaware Nation 4. Hastings Prince Edward Public Health 5. Halton Parents 6. Yoga Shack London 7. Weighty Matters 8. Dad Central Ontario 9. Middlesex-London Health Unit 10. AM980 London 11. Addiction Services of Thames Valley 12. Paleo Toronto Organization 13. Haliburton County FoodNet 14. Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit 15. London Ontario Events 16. Ontario Student Nutrition Program – Southwest Region 17. Obesity Canada <p>Twitter: Seven individual Twitter pages (individuals undisclosed to protect confidentiality)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aylmer Public Library 2. Boys and Girls Club of London 3. Brescia University College 4. Delaware Central Public School 5. Paradise Bingo 6. Zehrs Kitchener

Note: The social media pages listed encompass the pages that agreed to post the survey. However, it should be noted that individuals beyond this list could also share the posted link on their own personal Facebook and/or Twitter pages if they chose to do so.

Appendix 2.

Participant survey: Public experiences with and perceptions of nutritionists and registered dietitians in Ontario

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria*	Q1 DO YOU LIVE IN ONTARIO?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – <i>Unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this study. Thank you for your interest in our research.</i>
Demographics†	Q2 ARE YOU A REGISTERED DIETITIAN AND/OR NUTRITIONIST?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – <i>Unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this study. Thank you for your interest in our research.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> No
Objective 1*	Q3 HOW OLD ARE YOU?
	<input type="checkbox"/> 13–17 years <input type="checkbox"/> 18–45 years <input type="checkbox"/> 46–65 years <input type="checkbox"/> Over 65 years
Objective 2*	Q4 WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Non-binary <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
Objective 1*	Q5 IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REGISTERED DIETITIAN AND NUTRITIONIST IN ONTARIO?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – <i>proceed to Q6</i> <input type="checkbox"/> No – <i>proceed to Q7</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure – <i>proceed to Q6</i>
Objective 2*	Q6 PLEASE SPECIFY ANY DIFFERENCES YOU MAY BE AWARE OF BETWEEN A NUTRITIONIST AND A REGISTERED DIETITIAN.
	_____ _____
Objective 2*	Q7 HAVE YOU EVER SOUGHT OUT INFORMATION, ADVICE OR COUNSELLING ABOUT NUTRITION (IN PERSON/ONLINE/BLOG POST/MAGAZINE/NEWSLETTER/SOCIAL MEDIA)?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – <i>proceed to end of survey</i>

Objective 2[#]

Q8 WHO/WHERE DID THE NUTRITION INFORMATION COME FROM?

(Select all that apply) *Nutritionist may include: Holistic Nutritionist, Personal Trainer, Nutrition Specialist, Certified Nutritionist, Sports Nutritionist, Certified Health Coach, Certified Nutrition Consultant

- Registered Dietitian (RD)
- Nutritionist*
- Other: _____
- Not sure

Objectives 2 & 3[#]

Q9 PLEASE SELECT THE REASON(S) FOR SEEKING NUTRITION INFORMATION/ADVICE/COUNSELLING, AND FROM WHOM YOU RECEIVED THE INFORMATION.

	Registered Dietitian	Nutritionist	Other
Improve overall health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve/alter eating patterns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lose weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gain weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treat a specific condition, (i.e., diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease, high blood pressure)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pain or discomfort	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digestive problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnant (or trying) or breastfeeding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve sports performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Objective 2[#]

Q10 WERE YOUR HEALTH AND NUTRITION CONCERNS ADDRESSED BY ONE OR MORE OF THE NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS?

	Registered Dietitian	Nutritionist	Other
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q11 WERE YOU GIVEN SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING NUTRITION FROM FOOD FROM ONE OR MORE OF THE NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS?

	Registered Dietitian	Nutritionist	Other
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q12 WERE YOU GIVEN SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS (NATURAL PRODUCTS, VITAMINS/MINERALS, POWDER, DRINKS) FROM ONE OR MORE OF THE NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS?

	Registered Dietitian	Nutritionist	Other
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q13 DID YOU FOLLOW ANY RECOMMENDATIONS YOU WERE GIVEN BY ONE OR MORE OF THE NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS?

	Registered Dietitian	Nutritionist	Other
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q14 DID YOUR PREVIOUSLY STATED REASONS FOR SEEKING NUTRITION INFORMATION/ADVICE/COUNSELLING IMPROVE, WORSEN, OR REMAIN THE SAME?

	Much better	Moderately better	Slightly better	About the same	Slightly worse	Moderately worse	Much worse
Improve overall health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve/alter eating patterns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lose weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gain weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treat a specific condition, (i.e., diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease, high blood pressure)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pain or discomfort	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digestive problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnant (or trying) or breastfeeding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve sports performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Objectives 2 & 3*

Q15 DID YOU EXPERIENCE ANY ADVERSE/NEGATIVE SIDE EFFECTS AFTER FOLLOWING ANY ADVICE/INFORMATION YOU WERE GIVEN?

- Yes – *proceed to Q16*
- No – *proceed to end of survey*

Objective 3*

Q16 PLEASE SPECIFY ANY SIDE EFFECTS THAT YOU EXPERIENCED.

* Inclusion criteria: individuals who live in Ontario and are 13 years of age or older are eligible to participate in this study. Exclusion criteria: individuals who do not live in Ontario, are younger than 13 years of age, and are registered dietitians or "nutritionists," are not eligible to participate in this study.

† Demographics: age ranges and gender were collected.

‡ Objectives: 1) to determine if the public, in Ontario, understands the differences between a registered dietitian and a "nutritionist," 2) to understand the public's experiences with registered dietitians and "nutritionists" in Ontario, 3) to determine if the current nutrition landscape in Ontario has potential to harm the public.

The text boxes indicating inclusion/exclusion criteria, demographics, and objectives were added only for the purposes of the manuscript to indicate the intention of each question included. They were not included in the survey distributed to participants.

Appendix 3.

Criteria for determining accuracy of responses regarding the differences between an RD and “nutritionist” in Ontario

Response codes	Pre-determined criteria	Post-determined criteria
Correctly understood the difference(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dietitians are registered with a college/regulatory government body (or “nutritionists” are not) 2. Dietitians are regulated HCPs (or “nutritionists” are not) 3. Dietitians undergo accredited education in nutrition (or “nutritionists” do not) 4. Dietitians complete university education in nutrition + internship/practical training (or “nutritionists” may not) 5. Dietitians must write and pass the Canadian Dietetic Registration Exam 6. Anyone can call themselves a “nutritionist,” “Registered Dietitian” is a protected title in Ontario 7. Dietitians must practice using an evidence-based, scientific approach (or “nutritionists” may or may not) 	None
Did not understand the difference(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Response did not include a correct response 2. Response included a mix of correct and incorrect responses 3. Responses indicated uncertainty (e.g., “?,” “not sure,” “I think,” “I believe,” etc.) 	None
Cannot determine	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Response may have been correct, but the respondent did not indicate the nutrition provider to which they were referring 	2. No response was given

Note: To determine the public’s understanding of the differences between RDs and “nutritionists,” two questions were analyzed. First, respondents were asked if there is a difference between RDs and “nutritionists.” If they selected “no” or “not sure,” they were coded as “did not understand.” If respondents selected “yes,” they were asked to specify the difference. These open-ended responses were further analyzed for accuracy based on pre-determined criteria for a correct response, whereby a correct response included only one or more item(s) considered correct based on the criteria indicated above. Upon analyzing the responses, one additional criterion was added to the list for determining a correct response (see: post-determined criteria). Using this criterion, each response was independently coded by two researchers as “correctly understood (the differences),” “did not understand (the differences),” or “cannot determine.” Discrepancies in coding were resolved by reaching consensus through discussion. Those who indicated that there was a difference between RDs and “nutritionists” and those who were able to correctly identify a difference were determined to have a correct understanding of the difference between RDs and “nutritionists.” All others were grouped as those who did not understand the difference (or cannot determine).