

Problems of the nutritionist in obtaining information

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The information required is for teaching human nutrition to students taking either Institutional Management courses, the Post-Graduate Diploma in Dietetics, or the Royal Society of Health Diploma in Nutrition in Relation to Catering Management.

Information is required on the following:

- (1) Research in all aspects of human nutrition.
- (2) Advances in food technology and their effect on the nutritive value of foods.
- (3) Advances in medicine related to diseases treated by diet therapy.
- (4) Developments in catering and cooking techniques and their possible effect on the nutritive value of food served.
- (5) Results of dietary surveys, their significance and their bearing on the teaching of nutrition.
- (6) Social surveys concerned with living conditions, especially of vulnerable groups.
- (7) Dietary problems of other countries. Many different countries are likely to be represented among the students.
- (8) The chemical composition of new foods, for both normal diets and diet therapy.
- (9) Changes in food laws which affect the composition of foods.
- (10) Current public health problems.
- (11) Current economic problems and their effect on the availability and price of food.
- (12) Advances in techniques of communication, including methods of education.

The main problems encountered in keeping up to date are lack of time for reading the large number of journals it is necessary to consult to cover such a variety of information necessary for the teaching of practical nutrition, and the difficulty of assessing the significance of the information.

The dissemination of misinformation: a growing problem

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It is true that on occasions deliberate evasion or distortion of truth causes misunderstanding, but we should not overemphasize this source of difficulty. Government legislation, control by industrial associations and advertising authorities ensure an ever-increasing strict control.

Most misinterpretations of the facts are caused by one or more of the following:
(a) An oversimplification of scientific principles because of attempts to make them comprehensible to the layman. For example, we talk of body-building foods instead