

Letter from AJD Editor in Chief

"Expectations for ACD2022"

Thinking about becoming a dietitian who is trusted and respected by society

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In the process of teaching dietetics for more than 40 years, I feel that dreams and worries of young dietitians are similar to what I experienced, which reminds me of my younger days and pushes me to work for them.

ACD2022 agreed with me to arrange/program two symposiums and a workshop to consider how to address the worries and dreams of dietitians. The tentative titles are, "What should we do to be dietitians trusted and respected by society", "Let's support the Asian Journal of Dietetics of the dietitians, by the dietitians and, for the dietitians", "Workshop for young dietitians on understanding the current state of the legal system of each country regarding dietitians and what should be improved".

My thoughts on such ideas come from the following. A dietitian is the most important expert on food and health. However, it is not registered dietitians (RD) but medical doctors (MD), food scientists, etc. who have defined the recommended dietary allowances (RDAs) everywhere and enteral /parenteral formulas. Looking at journal articles on clinical nutrition, most of the authors are MDs and with few RDs. In Japan, about 20 years ago, a system was established in which it is not a MD but a registered dietitian (RD) who can teach clinical nutrition in the RDA training program. It was an event at the RD Training Curriculum Committee; the chairman who was a MD, claimed that MDs could teach about illness, but not about dietetics, and this became the current law.

However, even with such major reforms of the law, it seems that it is not easy for RDs to conduct research and publish their results in journal articles. In fact, articles published by RDs, teachers and researchers in dietetic programs are biased toward food science, biochemistry, and epidemiology, and there is only a little about dietetics. To improve the situation, I think it is necessary to recognize that research in the field of dietetics is extremely difficult. For example, it's an established theory that you can lose weight if you eat less, but how to eat less is really difficult. That is, even if the theory is understood, it cannot be applied. Research on the central role that a dietitian should play may fall into this area of application/ applied research. I think that it is not easy to establish a basis for the application of dietitians because it spans not only food science and medicine but also psychology, sociology, economics, etc., making the problem very complicated and difficult to study. A symbolic example is that even though there are many papers on obesity in the United States, real-life obesity has not improved. However, unless dietitians are successful in overcoming such difficulties, dietitian will not be a profession that is trusted and respected by society. With that in mind, I founded the Journal of Asian Dietetics three years ago. It would be greatly appreciated if dietitians could use this journal to improve the research ability of RDs and use it as an opportunity to publish journal articles. I would like us to discuss it together in the symposiums and workshop.

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