



# Diet Link

QUARTER 2 ISSUE 2012.02



## From The President's Desk



Dear colleagues,

I am delighted to see the MDA newsletter Diet Link back again, helmed by newsletter editor MDA member Ms. Mushidah Zakiah and Ms. Cherlyn.

The dietetic profession is constantly evolving, and with that comes the need for dietitians to adapt to the challenges that come with it. I know, work and tasks can seem very demanding, especially when you already have a lot on your plate, but stay inspired to constantly aim to do your best in your area of practice -- never forgetting the human factor in everything we do. The Diet Link is designed to be our MDA's piece of inspiration. Learn from what's new in dietetics around the world as well as locally; happenings within MDA and catching up with our members to see how they stay motivated and excel in their area of practice.

MDA is a professional dietetic organization and being a member means you are an important part of this profession. We are dietitians. We are MDA.

Enjoy the read,  
Indra Balaratnam  
President Malaysian Dietitians' Association

## Editor's Message



The year 2012 promises more changes, excitement and challenges for dietitians in Malaysia. More and more industries are becoming aware of and in need of dietetic services as integral part of their organization besides the healthcare industry. As dietitians, are we ready for the challenge? Do not be alarmed! Our MDA council members are pulling their socks up to provide a platform for Malaysian's dietitians to grow together to fulfill the industries need of dietetics professional services.

In this issue, Diet Link focuses on the recent activities, current happenings, upcoming events and highlights of the profession to inspire our Malaysian's dietitians in delivering their roles as a healthcare provider. Check out what and how fellow dietitians are doing all around Malaysia through your Diet Link!

Diet Link is now an e-newsletter which is easier to access through the improved MDA website. Now, networking and communication with fellow dietitians is much easier. Moreover, MDA is on Facebook! Enjoy the e-newsletter; follow MDA on Facebook and [www.dietitians.org.my](http://www.dietitians.org.my) for the latest information on what's happening in the profession!

Mushidah & Cherlyn  
The Editors



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##### Diet Support Staff Competency Training Committee

Chair: Ms. Koh Pei Ling



## Staff Competency Training

Diet Link interviewed Koh Pei Ling, a dietitian from Sunway Medical Centre (SunMed) who is actively involved in organizing the training for diet support staff from various hospitals.

It was initiated by the Chief Dietitian, Ms Teng Yu Yuet in 2007 after she noticed a success from similar trainings conducted for in-house staff at SunMed since 2003. With the involvement of MDA, she initially set up a committee which comprised of a group of dedicated dietitians namely Pn Mary Easaw, Yang Wai Yew, Koh Pei Ling, Sophia Wong, Celeste Lau Wai Hong, Zaridah Zainuri and Wong Siau Fui. The current committee also includes Ho Shiau Fen, Ooi Ai Im and Wong Wen Yin in the organizing team.

Diet aids and chefs are the primary target with the aim to provide better understanding of therapeutic preparation of meals for hospital food service. Divided into 3 stages; beginner, intermediate and advanced, the topics range from the basic science of nutrition, therapeutic diets, customer service, food service and advance to nutrition screening. The trainings take place 2 to 3 times per year in various kitchens in hospitals. Like previous courses were held in Hospital Selayang, Sunway Medical Centre, Hospital Sultan Ismail, Hospital Pulau Pinang, Sime Darby Medical Centre, Hospital Umum Sarawak and Ampang Puteri Specialist Centre with 24 participants on each session. The 2-day course is packed with lectures, practical sessions, discussions and visits for only a minimum fee of RM300 to RM350 depending on the level of course. Two thumbs up to our fellow dietitians for their great job!

For others, let's not miss out the chance. Send your staff for the course to enhance the quality of your service. Check out the coming dates for this year through the MDA websites!

## EAT RIGHT NOW

@ Prince Court Medical Centre!



Top Left: Food display for different modified diet  
Top Right: Food Tasting;  
Middle: Group Photo  
Bottom: Participants on training



### Prince Court Medical Centre's dietitians celebrated Nutrition Month for the first time!

"Eat Right" was chosen as the theme to raise awareness with the public, staff and corporate clients on the importance of healthy eating. Launched by their Chief of Lifestyle Modification Centre, Datin Farah Di Ba Khan and clinical dietitian Ms. Tan Yen Sing, the one month celebration was packed with nutritious activities such as weekly food demos by the in-house chefs and kids camp where children are given opportunity to compete in the DIY sandwich challenge, clown balloon sculpture and face painting. Celebrity guest, Kevin Zahri was also present for the launch to instill awareness of the need to combine physical activity with eating healthy. Throughout the month, the in-house fine dining restaurant also offered healthy and delicious menus to support the mission of healthy eating. The activities gained the media's attention. This is a good way to showcase our dietitians' role to the public in Malaysia. Let us all mark our calendars next year and celebrate nutrition month our own way!



## UP CLOSE WITH ...



Behind her soft-spoken and pleasant nature is a dietitian who commands much respect from fellow health professionals and her colleagues. Her clinical experience and leadership skills shows how a dietitian can excel in a hospital practice. For this issue of Diet Link, we have the pleasure of meeting Puan Mageswary a/p Lapchmanan.

Better known as Puan Mages by most of the junior dietitians, she was one of the eight graduates from the 4th batch Dietetic degree from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in 1991. Looking back through the years, Puan Mages has achieved much in the last 21 years. She started her career at the Slimming and Health Centre. 2 years later, she was selected by Ministry of Health to serve in Hospital Sungai Petani before being transferred to Hospital Kuala Lumpur (HKL) in 1995. In HKL, she rose to the challenge and practiced in many disciplines of clinical nutrition. HKL was and still is a referral centre for various medical disciplines.

Puan Mages was amongst the first dietitians who insisted that patients in Intensive Care Units must be attended by dietitians in terms of the nutrition and diet therapy. "Being a pioneer", she admitted, "it was a tough job to convince the medical practitioners that dietitians are the best referral point when it comes to nutrition and diet. However, we persevered and proved that our role is vital."

Puan Mages also brought changes to the paediatric unit. "Paediatric Unit is like another hospital by itself and it is different from what was taught during undergraduate studies". That's her comment in a nutshell when we asked about HKL Paediatric Unit. Nevertheless, she took up the challenge and always brought herself forward to discuss clinical findings with paediatricians during ward rounds. Her professionalism and care for the patients won the Paediatricians' trust.

She also inspired the same respect when she got involved with HKL's renal patient dietetic management. After 14 years in HKL, Puan Mages was promoted and transferred to Hospital Selayang in 2009.

Puan Mages' contribution in HKL didn't stop at just her clinical work as a dietitian. She was an active committee member for the Jawatankuasa Pengiklanan dan Fakta Nutrisi under Jabatan Keselamatan Makanan for more than ten years.

In Hospital Selayang ( the nations' referral centre for hepatobiliary and renal cases), Puan Mages is now the Head of Food Service and Dietetic. When asked her view of food service of a hospital which is operated by an outsource caterer, Puan Mages prefers if the food provided in hospitals is prepared in-house. This allows the Dietetics Department more flexibility to provide more care and manage the diet that is being prepared for patients.

Being a proactive head of the unit, she has set up short and long term plans for the dietitians' team in order to ensure the role of dietitian being recognized as part of the integrated healthcare team in patients' care.

"Reading is essential for a dietitian. Knowledge learnt during the undergraduate course does not sustain, therefore, it is important for a dietitian to ensure continuous education. With knowledge comes confidence."

Puan Mages adds that at the moment, Malaysia does not have dietitians who have expertise in specific fields. According to her, it is good direction for Malaysian dietitians to look into in when shaping their future.

Ending the conversation, she wishes luck for all dietitians in undertaking the task as healthcare professional.

## SIGN UP FOR 2012 MEMBERSHIP!

### Are you a member yet?

In our effort to reach out all the dietitians in Malaysia, MDA is constantly updating the database. With the improvement in the official website, now, the registration process is made convenient for you. With our hassle-free registration method, you are a few clicks away from great benefits awaiting you!

If you are not a member, this is what you've missed:

- 1) News and updates in the professions which includes activities and upcoming seminars and events, personal development opportunities, vacancies and volunteer works through the websites or our Facebook Group.
- 2) Access to professional dietitian resources.
- 3) Discounted price for MDA conference fee
- 4) Networking opportunities with fellow dietitians from all over Malaysia. Share your thoughts, views and ideas and learn from other dietitians on issues pertaining to your day to day practice.
- 5) For Student members - Get exciting exposure to the profession to prepare you for the real world of healthcare professional.

### You think it's cool?

Hurry up and get further details on this from the website [www.dietitians.org.my](http://www.dietitians.org.my)  
If you have registered to be an MDA member before and would like to clarify the status of your membership, please contact MDA Admin, Ms.Elgin at [admin@dietitians.org.my](mailto:admin@dietitians.org.my)

To download a softcopy of the Diet Link, please visit [www.dietitians.org.my](http://www.dietitians.org.my)

# EMPOWERMENT

## Business Etiquette:

By: Mushidah Zakiah

Are you well mannered at work?

This segment of Diet Link will bring exciting topics on tips and ideas to provide dietitians with simple and straightforward facts to enhance your soft skills in the profession. In this issue, let's share tips on some important business etiquette as a quick check and balance on how to behave at work. We may have first class degrees with vast experiences in the profession, however, have we ever pondered whether we are professional enough at work? Let's check these tips!

### 1 When you dress:

- Good grooming is important. You don't need to be a slave to fashion, but being neat and smartly dressed create good impressions and instill confidence.
- While your personal sense of style may be exotic and eye-catching, office dress codes should reflect professionalism and fit the culture of your workplace.

### 2 When you talk:

- Speak of facts. Others often view us as the "Walking Diet Encyclopedia". If you are unsure, it is okay to say "I will revert back to you on this matter" rather than guessing it.
- Speak clearly at a moderate pace. Avoid swearing. Be aware of the tone of your voice and your body language. If you are being given negative feedback, accept it. Being defensive will make you look unprofessional.

### 3 When you e-mail:

- Think twice before hitting the "send" button. Do a quick proofread prior to sending out e-mails to avoid spelling or grammatical errors.
- Do not be emotional when writing e-mail. Remember, this is business e-mail, not a letter to your friend.

### 4 When you are invited for meetings or events through invitations:

- Always respond to invitations to let others know if you "Accept", "Decline" or "Tentative to attending the meetings."
- If you cannot make it at a very last minute, nominate a representative on your behalf. Make sure your representative knows about the agenda beforehand. Inform the organizer about your absence.

### 5 When you make mistakes:

- Sometimes we make genuine mistakes. Take it as a learning curve on your way to success.
- The important thing is to apologize when you've made a mistake. Even if you are the boss, admitting your mistakes will win you more respect from your team and peers.

### 6 When you are on leave or out of office:

This is especially important and crucial when you are the only Dietitian in the hospital.

- Before you go on leave or out of office, notify everyone you routinely deal with that you will be away for certain period of time and the date you will be back.
- It is good to handover your task or roles to a trusted colleague if the task needs to be attended to while you are away. Otherwise, you have no choice but to make yourself available via the phone if possible.

### 7 When you answer phone calls:

- Answer phone calls immediately.
- Use standard phone etiquette if you have one in your organization. If you do not have one, answer politely as simple as "Good Morning, Maria speaking!"
- Smile when you talk, it will reflect through your voice. Sounds funny? Try it out!
- If you can't resolve an issue at that point of time, assure the caller that you will get back to them. That's courtesy.

### 8 When you receive help, gifts or compliments:

- A simple thank you would be more than enough.

## Upcoming Events

Check out on these events and plan your calendar ahead for 2012! Don't forget to check on the early birds offer.

**Act smart, register now!**

#### APRIL 2012

- **Nutrition & Dietetics Professional Competency Symposium** (5-7th April 2012)  
Organized by: IJN and IMU
- **MDES 1st Diabetes Seminar** (20-22nd April 2012)

#### MAY 2012

- **4th Annual Diabetic Foot Symposium/Workshop & Trade Exhibition** (11-13th May 2012)  
Venue: Istana Hotel, Kuala Lumpur  
<http://www.diabetesmalaysia.com.my>

#### JUNE 2012

- **International Congress on Renal Nutrition and Metabolism (ICRNM) Conference** (26-30th June 2012)  
Please visit their website for further info:  
<http://www.renalnutritionweek.com/>

#### JULY 2012

- **Malaysian's Dietitians Association Scientific Conference & 18th Annual General Meeting**  
Theme: Gastrointestinal & Nutrition Management: Continual care  
Focus: GIT Disorders in Adults and Pediatrics  
Date: 9th & 10th JULY 2012  
Venue: Swan Convention Centre, Sunway, Selangor  
<http://www.dietitians.org.my>

#### SEPTEMBER 2012

- **16th International Congress of Dietetics** (5-8th September 2012)  
Find the links below for further details:  
<http://www.icd2012.com/>

Hope you've learnt something! Evaluate yourself whether you practice all these!

In the next issue, do not miss out on another article to empower yourself profession. We will feature tips on presentation tips. "Educating the non healthcare personnel"