

REPORTING OF NUTRITION & NUTRITIONAL RELATED ISSUES BY THE WEST INDIAN MEDICAL JOURNAL: A 10-YEAR ANALYSIS OF PUBLICATIONS

Shelly-Ann Hunte

Project Supervisor: Dr. S. Nichols

2007

Background: Nutrition is implicated as a major risk factor in four out of the five leading causes of death (Heart Diseases, Diabetes Mellitus, Malignant Neoplasms, and Cerebrovascular Diseases) in Trinidad & Tobago. The nutrition transition has taken different characteristics in various developing countries, cultures and historical eras. Given the fact that nutrition is a **modifiable** lifestyle factor that influences the development of these chronic disease

Objective: This study sought to provide a descriptive report on the scientific integrity, study design, research methodologies and statistical soundness of the nutrition-related articles published in the West Indian Medical Journal over a ten year period (February 1995 – November 2005) with a view to assessing its public health impact.

Design: Of the 845 scientific articles published within this period 5.1% (43) were related to the discipline of nutrition. One article was excluded because it could not be found in the library. Non-epidemiological research accounted for 36 % of the articles evaluated and these included reports on scientific sessions, medical history, editorials and special articles.

Results: Epidemiological articles accounted for the remaining 64%. The largest number of articles (26.1%) was published in the year 2002. The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica was the geographic setting of 70.3% of the articles with authors also being affiliated with the institution particularly the Tropical Metabolism Research Institute and the Tropical Metabolism Research Unit. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were included in 96.3% and 77.8 % of articles respectively. Descriptive statistics included measures of central tendency, frequency and percentages where as the most commonly used inferential statistical

measure was the t-test (40.7%). The maximum number of references cited by any one article is 46 and the minimum 4 (mean 23.11 ± 11.4). Journal accounted for 75 % of references cited

Conclusion: Again the importance of research in the discipline of nutrition can never be overstated and this is highlighted in this paper. The development of a checklist for standardizing reporting within the region will provide assistance and guidance for researchers and authors. The integrity and soundness of research articles published will dramatically increase.