Healthcare Professionals’ Perspective on Seafood, Health & Diet
BACKGROUND

• On-going programme to explore ways of promoting consumption of seafood
• Healthcare Professionals = can be critical point of contact with patients re. diet
• Called on and expected to give dietary advice
• Could be a valuable conduit for promotion of seafood as part of healthy diet
• Small study (10 interviews) but in-depth, face-to-face
• Practice Nurses, Health Visitors, Midwives, District Nurses, Pharmacists
DIETARY ADVICE

• ALL were giving dietary advice on a DAILY basis
• Diet = VERY important part of their role
• General advice was:
  – Well-balanced diet
  – 5 fruit & veg a day
  – **2 portions of fish a week**
  – Caution re. high/saturated fat, sugar, salt, fizzy drink
  – Caution: take-away food, convenience foods
  – Avoid frying food
  – Exercise


supporting the seafood industry for a sustainable, profitable future
SPECIFIC DIETARY ADVICE - PREGNANCY

- Shellfish fine as long as fully cooked and served as part of HOT meal
- No cold prawns (can develop bacteria after cooking)
- No more than two cans of tuna a week
- Avoid swordfish & marlin – mercury
- No more than two portions of oily fish a week
- Avoid fresh mayo & mousse
- Avoid alcohol, liver and pate
- Avoid soft and blue cheese
- Eggs, ready meals, meat need to be fully cooked
SPECIFIC DIETARY ADVICE - DIABETICS

- Less salt
- Less chocolate
- Fewer fizzy drinks
- Less crisps
- Avoid ready meals
- Eat more fruit and vegetables
- **Eat fish as part of a balanced diet**
- Fish can lower blood sugar
SPECIFIC DIETARY ADVICE – HEART CONDITIONS

- Moderate amount of hard fat in diet
- Grill, stew, bake or roast
- Eat complex not processed carbohydrates
- **Eat at least two portions of oily fish a week**
- Eat more fruit & vegetables
- Watch sugar in diet
- Alcohol in moderation
- Omega 3 = positive in context of heart attacks and stokes:
  - “The big one is omega 3. If someone has had a stroke or a heart attack that’s to do with bad cholesterol, blocked arteries we say eat tuna, sardines, oily fish three times a week’
SPECIFIC DIETARY ADVICE - CHOLESTEROL

• Oily fish and omega 3 mentioned directly in context of cholesterol
• Known to REDUCE bad cholesterol
• Alternative to statins:
  • “Oily fish DOES lower your cholesterol. They see an improvement after 12 weeks and that keeps them going”
SPECIFIC DIETARY ADVICE - OBESITY

• Growing problem!!
• Need to RE-EDUCATE re. diet and lifestyle
  • “A healthy diet, cut out the bad things, the cream buns, the sausage rolls. We talk about carbs, protein, fish, a healthy well-balanced diet”
• Eat a lot more salad
• **Eat a lot more fish**
• Minimise red meat consumption
• Childhood obesity = increasingly an issue
• Again, need to re-educate, teach good patterns
SPECIFIC DIETARY ADVICE - WEANING

• Advised from 6 months
• Mashed up family food = best:
  • “No jars of anything, whatever the family’s eating… veg, fish fingers”
• Texture = important, good for digestion and for mouth feel
• Fruit & veg and fish encouraged
• A challenge in some areas where cultures are diverse:
  • “We can up up to 27 languages being spoken”
• Can be an uphill struggle to encourage good dietary practice if language and culture a barrier
STATUS OF DIETARY ADVICE

• For ALL dietary advice = PART OF THEIR JOB
• For some = the MAIN FOCUS
• For some = not the focus but still important:
  • “Diet represents about a third of the advice I give”
• For some = DAILY activity:
  • “It’s very important and very much part of the care package that the Health Board expect us to deliver’
TOPICAL ISSUES – OMEGA 3

• In Glasgow omega 3 mentioned as one of most topical issues in relation to heart disease
• Glasgow’s rate of heart disease = legendary!
• Real moves afoot to address it
• Studies where oily fish used to address cholesterol, stroke, heart attack issues
• And omega 3 prescribed for those not able/willing to comply with advice to increase oily fish intake (Omacor)
CRUNCH POINTS

• When are patients MOST open to advice re. diet and including fish in diet?
  • Newly-diagnosed conditions (diabetes, high cholesterol, CV conditions)
  • Post life-threatening medical events, emergencies (heart attack, stroke)
  • Knee/hip replacements in over-weight patients
  • Parents of obese children
  • Patients in weight-loss programmes
  • Pregnancy but seems to be more advice about what NOT to eat than reassurance about safe fish to eat
  • Weaning
SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Communication from Health Boards & Trusts
- Google
- BBC Health web pages
- Dieticians
- Dedicated organisations (e.g Diabetics UK)
- Seminars & Conferences
- CPD
- Sales reps
- NHS Choices
- NHS 24 bulletin
- Government papers
- Change for Life
- Professional bodies (e.g Royal College of Midwives)
ADVICE ON FISH IN DIET

• Almost ALL talked about TWO portions of fish a week.
• Some said two portions of OILY fish a week:
  • “Blanket advice because it should be part and parcel of a good diet”
• Oily fish especially in context of cardio, cholesterol and diabetes.
• Even at weaning, getting them started early:
  • ‘They (mothers) don’t think they can’t do it but I tell them to have tuna and baked potato, smoked haddock or home-made fish fingers’
INTEREST IN ACCESS TO MORE INFO ON SEAFOOD?

• YES PLEASE!!!
• Even if already recommending fish on a regular basis felt they & patients would benefit from more info:
  • “Raising awareness, keeping fish on the agenda”
• No real channel for nutritional advice on fish for HCPs
• Would like to boost their own knowledge
• And, in turn, pass this onto patients
• NEEDS TO BE PRACTICAL
• ONLY relevant if it leads to FISH ON A PLATE!
WHAT WOULD THEY LIKE TO HEAR?

• Key nutritional benefits
• Science behind fish’s benefits taught as part of curriculum
• Easy-peasy science for patients
• Advice on species
• Sustainability in a nutshell
• Recipes and more recipes!
• Patient leaflets and websites
• Advice on weaning
• Advice on portion size
FISH IS THE DISH

- Excellent responses to Fish is the Dish website
- Happy to direct patients to the site
- Good tool for encouraging patients to find out more about fish and its benefits
- And ACCESS TO RECIPES – most important
CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Almost all involved in CPD
- Need to register or log hours of professional studies to maintain status in job
- Sometimes involves seminars or conferences
- Learning about fish and its benefits would count towards this
- Suggestion that Seafish might be involved in this arena
- Passing on info re. fish to HCPs who, in turn, pass it on to patients
HARNESSING THIS RESOURCE

• Clear that HCPs open to receiving more info on seafood and its health benefits
• ALL were in a position to make a difference to their patients well-being
• Number of channels available to address them
• Clear finding that they ARE recommending fish in the diet and would be happy to do more
• Most importantly need to turn ADVICE into ACTION

• But clearly an appetite for more information & a willing audience