



# Diet Link

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MALAYSIAN DIETITIANS' ASSOCIATION  
QUARTER 4 OCTOBER – DECEMBER ISSUE 2012.10

in this issue

2 & 3

## Dietitians in Action

4 & 5

## Empowerment

Polish Your Presentation Skills  
Nail That Job!

6

## Up Close & Personal

featuring Professor Fatimah Arshad

7

## What's New

In the Profession: Low FODMAP Diet

8

## Announcement

and Upcoming Events

## President's Message



Dear friends,

What does it take for you to stand out in a crowd? The instant answers that come to mind are confidence, pride, etc. Many feel that if they do not possess those qualities, they will be yet another face in the crowd. Soon we become complacent, just like that. In our profession as dietitians, we are part of a crowd every day -- management, doctors, nurses, other health professionals, students, clients and staff. So many people to convince and impress.

However, the true quality that will make you stand out in a crowd as a dietitian is your passion. Your passion is what will propel you to embrace your role, broaden your knowledge and develop your skills to grow professionally. This quality will not only make you stand out in a crowd, but SHINE!

MDA would like to welcome all new Ordinary members to our professional family. We hope you'll never feel like just another face in the crowd.

We are dietitians. We are MDA.

Indra Balaratnam  
President  
Malaysian Dietitians' Association

## Editor's Message



Fellow Dietitians,

We have approached the final quarter of the year and what better time than now to reflect on 2012 as well plan for the year ahead.

MDA Scientific Conference 2012 was an amazing one and it would have not been successful without the support from you – our MDA members. Read our report on the 2-day annual event in our "Dietitians In Action" segment (page 2). If you missed out on the conference, we are sure the information will inspire you to attend next year's conference. The dates have been confirmed so do mark it in your calendars.

Diet Link would also like to congratulate all 2012 dietetic graduates and welcome you on board. We look forward to working together to heighten the profession. On that note, Diet Link has some tips for you to kick start your career in the "Empowerment" segment (page 5).

Last but not least, we get "Up Close & Personal" with yet another wonderful MDA Member. Flip to page 6 for an insight on the journey of MDA's first President, Professor Fatimah Arshad.

Happy Reading!

Cherlyn & Mushidah  
The Editors



## EDITORIAL TEAM

Ms Mushidah Zakiah, Editor  
Ms Cheryl Lee, Co-Editor

## MALAYSIAN DIETITIANS' ASSOCIATION LIST OF COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR YEAR 2011 - 2013

### Immediate Past President

Ms. Tan Yoke Hwa

### President

Ms. Indra Balaratnam

### Vice President

Dr. Hazreen bin Abdul Majid

### Hon. Secretary

Mr. Rosli bin Mohd Sali

### Hon. Treasurer

Ms. Ng Ai Kah

### Council Member

Ms. Rozanna M. Rosly  
Ms. Ng Yee Voon  
Ms. Nur Izianti binti Tajudin  
Mr. Nazrul Hadi bin Ismail  
Ms. Mushidah binti Zakiah

Findings and opinion expressed by Diet Link do not necessarily reflect the view of the Malaysian Dietitians' Association. The contents of Diet Link shall not be quoted without prior permission from the Malaysian Dietitians' Association.

### Malaysian Dietitians' Association

Suite 1208, Level 12, Amcorp Tower  
18 Persiaran Barat,  
46050 Petaling Jaya,  
Selangor, Malaysia  
Tel: 603-7948-5233  
Fax: 603-7955-6363  
Email: enquiries@dietitians.org.my

## HEAD OF MDA SUBCOMMITTEES

### Public Relations, Communication and Media Committee

Chair: Ms. Indra Balaratnam

### Education, Training & Research Committee

Chair: Ms. Rozanna M. Rosly

### Awards, Grants and Scholarships Committee

Chair: Ms. Ng Yee Voon

### Website Committee

Chair: Ms. Nur Izianti binti Tajudin

### MDA Annual Scientific Conference Organizing Committee

Chair: Dr. Hazreen bin Abdul Majid

### Volunteer and External Activities Committee

Chair: Mr Nazrul Hadi bin Ismail

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

## Dietitians in Action

# MDA Scientific Conference 2012

The Malaysian Dietitians' Association Scientific Conference was held on 9 and 10 July 2012 at SWAN Convention Centre. The theme this year was Gastrointestinal & Nutrition Management with focus on GIT Disorders in adults and paediatrics. Local and international experts shared their experience, findings and knowledge with about 200 participants, consisting of Malaysian and international dietitians. The conference was filled with symposiums, case studies, paper and poster presentations and exhibition booths.

The 2-day event was officiated by YB Dato' Sri Liow Tiong Lai, Minister of Health Malaysia. At the opening ceremony, a multimedia presentation revealed the revamped MDA website to all delegates, after which, the best students of 2012 received awards for their achievement (details on the next page). The opening ceremony concluded with our Minister of Health visiting the exhibition booths.

Among the highlights of the conference this year were the topics delivered by our invited international speakers. Dr. Susan Joy Shepherd, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Medicine, Monash University, Australia, gave an in depth look into her very own low FODMAPs diet strategy in the management of gastrointestinal disorders. (Flip to page 7 to read more about FODMAPs). The topic Enteral Nutrition (EN) was presented by Liesl Wandrag, a Clinical Doctoral Research Fellow and Ella Segaran, a Specialist Dietitian for Critical Care, both from Department of Nutrition and Dietetics Imperial College of London, UK. New findings were reviewed by Liesl on the optimal provision of EN among ICU patients in her practice.

The conference also featured local experts in Dietetics. Our very own Vice President of MDA who is also a Senior Lecturer from University of Malaya, Dr. Hazreen Abdul Majid, enlightened participants in his symposium on the role of prebiotics in Enteral Nutrition (EN). The talk focused on reducing diarrhea, a common complication in EN. Dr. Hazreen also highlighted an interesting fact that there are many studies focusing on role of fibre in minimising diarrhea in EN patients but very few really investigate the effect of prebiotics and diarrhoea.

Ms. Siti Hawa Mohd Taib, a well-known practising dietitian and Head of Dietetic Department of University Malaya Medical Centre, shared her findings on nutritional management of GI disorders among paediatric patients. She also discussed case studies based on her own experience in management of Crohn's Disease an integral part of long term and short term patient care.

There was also a presentation on diabetes and medical nutrition therapy practice by Associate Professor Dr. Winnie Chee from International Medical University. She highlighted the fact that we should move forward to evidence-based practice in management of diabetes.

Dr. Romzi Mohd Ali, Senior Clinical Dietitian from Department of Dietetic & Food Services, Hospital Kuala Lumpur, is known for her experience in surgical nutrition. She shared insight into possible and common complications in surgical patients from the perspective of nutrition management. She also outlined some key factors leading to successful dietary management in surgical cases.

Apart from dietitians, doctors were also invited to share their findings and to present from the viewpoint of a physician. Professor Dr. Chin Kin Fah, Professor and Senior Consultant Surgeon at the Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya shared his views as a physician and his expectations from nutritional intervention for patients undergoing bariatric surgery. He recognised dietitians' role in the management of his bariatric surgery cases whereby both short term and long term goal needs to be properly prioritised to ensure the aim of surgery is achieved. Renowned physician from Hong Kong, Dr. Man Wo Tsang delivered an insightful talk on metabolic peri-operative management. As a specialist in Endocrinology, Diabetes & Metabolism, he strongly disagrees with the traditional method of having patients fast before or after surgery. Based on studies, prolonged fasting in metabolic cases will have negative implications on patients such as impaired neutrophil function, increased risk of infections, length of hospital stay and worst of all, it increases mortality rate. He presented the novel way of preparation for surgery which is to load carbohydrate before and after surgery to improve insulin sensitivity and reduce all related metabolic stress.

Overall, the scientific conference was a successful learning platform for all participants. If you missed the conference or want to see the presentations, selected slides are available on the MDA Website. Simply log in at [www.dietitians.org.my](http://www.dietitians.org.my) and click on 'Clinical News'. Photos are also available on the Events section of the website.

Looking forward, MDA has already started planning for the 2013 conference. Mark your calendars for the MDA Scientific Conference 2013 happening on the 21st to 23rd of June. The theme is SPRINT (Specifically Prescribed Diet & Nutrition Therapy) – Advancing Dietitians Practices. The theme is based on the fact that in this rapid industrialised era, nutrition information needs to be disseminated by leaders in diet and nutrition whether for fitness or wellbeing.

Watch out for more information to be announced soon on the MDA Website and Facebook group page.

## DOWN UNDER AT THE 16<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF DIETETICS 2012

The 16th International Congress of Dietetics 2012, hosted by the International Confederation of Dietetics Association and The Dietitians Association of Australia was held in the beautiful city of Sydney from 5th to 8th September 2012 at the Sydney Convention Centre. The Governor of New South Wales, Professor Marie Bashir, was the guest of honour at the official opening ceremony. All the member-countries flags were displayed.

The theme of this year's conference was LEAP: Leadership, Evidence and Advancing Practice. The scientific programme explored new directions in the various fields of nutrition and dietetics. There were talks and discussions by high profile experts from across the world on issues that affect the growth of the dietetic profession globally. Topics that were food for thought included sustainability, the environment, climate change, nutrigenomics and a standardised language as well as education standards in dietetics. The sessions were insightful and made us realise that we are part of a larger scheme of things for the greater good.

It was nice to see the presence of Malaysian dietitians in poster and paper presentations at the ICD 2012. It certainly put our dietetic professionals and institutions on the world map of international dietetics.

On the administrative front, Dr. Hazreen Abdul Majid and myself, as Vice President and President respectively of MDA, represented the association at the Pre-Conference Strategic Planning Meeting organised by the International Confederation of

Dietetics Associations (ICDA). The meeting was a brainstorming session on setting the strategic plan for the next four years. One role of ICDA for the coming years is to be an advocate of issues affecting nutrition and dietetics worldwide. I attended the Asian Federation of Dietetics Association (AFDA) meeting as well where we discussed the development of the AFDA website. MDA will keep you updated of any future news from both these organisations.

Like with all conferences, it is always nice to catch up with old acquaintances and to establish new friendships among our professional peers. The conference organisers made it conducive to network by having several social events - the highlight being the Aussie Food Festival which was a casual reception held at the Doltone House where delegates could mix and mingle.

All in all, the ICD 2012 had the right mix of research, sharing of experience, professional empowerment and social networking which made it a truly memorable event. Better start planning to be at ICD 2016 in Granada, Spain!

By: Indra Balaratnam



### Le Tour de SunMed

In conjunction with the recent MDA Conference, a visit to the Dietetics Department of Sunway Medical Centre was held. A total of 11 participants consisting of both students and dietitians seized the opportunity to take part in this tour which took place on 11th July 2012.

Ms Saw Bee Suan, a Senior Dietitian at SunMed, delivered a presentation on the services provided by their Dietetics Department. Mr Jimmy Mah, Food Service Manager of SunMed, briefed the participants on the menu ordering process, floor plan of the kitchen, and also gave the participants the opportunity to observe the tray line. The participants got a chance to tour the kitchen, as well as get to know more about different texture modified diets offered by SunMed such as the blended diet.

The tour concluded with a visit to the diet technicians' office to understand the menu selection process for patients on therapeutic diets. It was indeed a fruitful tour which will definitely come in handy to improve dietetic services at their respective workplace. Sharing is caring!



Left: Listening intently to Mr Jimmy, Food Service Manager of SunMed  
Right: Big smiles from everyone after the tour!

### Ravishing Retro Nite!

On the night of 9th July 2012, the delegates of the MDA Conference got the chance to let our hair down, have fun and mingle with our peers at the MDA Conference Dinner. This annual tradition never fails to create an enjoyable environment for conference delegates to mingle with each other. Many junior members and student members who attended the dinner got a chance to meet the seniors who warmly welcomed them. The retro theme rocked the SWAN Convention Center Ballroom and the night was filled with games, dancing competitions, singing performance and even the search of king and queen of the night (best dressed). Do check out the pictures on the MDA Website. We are all looking forward to a bigger and better Gala Dinner next year. The more the merrier!



Photos: We travelled back in time in costumes and dance moves!

### MDA Celebrates Varsities' Best Students

In line with the increasing awareness of the impact of diet on one's overall health, the need for dietitians is on the rise. Malaysias universities are producing more and more dietitians to meet this demand. As of 2012, there are a total of seven universities competing to produce the best dietitians in the country. They are Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia,

International Medical University, Universiti Sains Malaysia, International Islamic University, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi MARA and Universiti Darul Iman. Universiti Darul Iman just started their first intake of dietetic students while the other institutions have had graduated batches. MDA, in its aim to heighten the profession, recognises and awards best performers among the dietetics students. This year, the best student from each university received RM250 cash and RM50 waiver of MDA Membership Fee. During the opening ceremony of the MDA Scientific Conference 2012, these deserving students received the award from our guest of honour, Dato' Sri Liow Tiong Lai, Minister of Health Malaysia.

MDA warmly welcomes all fresh graduates and congratulates the top students for 2012:

- |                                                   |                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Mr Ng See Hoe (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) | 2) Ms Monakshee Devi Jhundoo (International Medical University)  |
| 3) Ms Divya A/P Vanoh (Universiti Sains Malaysia) | 4) Ms Azizah Mohamed (International Islamic University Malaysia) |
| 5) Ms Ooi Poh Hwa (Universiti Putra Malaysia)     | 6) Ms Farhanah Binti Ahmad Shuhaimi (Universiti Teknologi MARA)  |

# Polish Your Presentation Skills: Deliver The Right Message, The Right Way

As dietitians, apart from one-to-one counseling, our role is often to deliver health talks to the public which consists of people from many walks of life. As simple as it may seem, presenting is a skill which takes practice and knowledge to master. The right skills will ensure that our message reaches across to the intended recipients. Whether you are preparing for your first presentation or you have done it before and would like to refine your existing skill, here are some useful pointers.

## Before Presenting

- Identify the goal of your presentation
  - what is the message you are trying to get across? Write a simple sentence which explains the objective of your presentation, and keep this sentence in mind throughout the planning process
- Do your homework:
  - What are the demographics of your audience?
  - What are the values and the mission of the audience that you are presenting to?
  - What other educational programs have the audience members recently attended?
  - What is the existing knowledge base of the audience?
  - Why are people attending this presentation - do they have to or do they want to?
- Organise your presentation into three parts: introduction, main content and summary
- Plan three to four key points that you want to highlight and emphasise these points throughout your presentation
- Keep the language simple and avoid jargons so you won't have to interrupt the flow of your talk to define a word or a phrase
- Prepare answers to possible frequently asked questions
- Visit the room/facility you will present in to understand the layout of the room and make arrangements for any device or presentation aids way in advance of your presentation
- Rehearse your presentation numerous times before the big day (even though you have been using the same slides for years)
- On the day itself, arrive early to assemble your materials and to compose yourself. Make casual talk with your audience before greeting them as a group on stage

## During the presentation

- Smile during your presentation and make eye contact with your audience
- Pause often enough for your audience to digest the information but not too often as they may get distracted
- Change your volume and pitch throughout the presentation. Monotonous presentations are boring.
- Slow down when bringing up key points in order to get the audience to focus on what you are saying.
- Do not rely on your presentation slides or read off your handouts to get your point

across. Your slides and handouts should supplement your talk, not provide a detailed explanation

- As for your personal notes, these are some key tips:

- Use your notes sparingly
- Don't write full sentences in your notes - use simple words and phrases in an outline form
- Write your notes large enough, so a quick glance will refresh your memory
- Do not cram too much on each index card or you may appear to be monotonously reading from it

- Allow for audience involvement, but do not rely on it to fill time

- Remain focused on what you are saying as you go—thinking too far ahead may cause you to stumble over your words

- Watch your body language throughout your presentation and avoid the following:

- Crossing your arms in front of you
- Fidgeting with your notes or a pen
- Leaning on a podium or table
- Using extravagant hand motions throughout your presentation

- Move around during your presentation to maintain the attention. Avoid standing rigidly behind a podium or table

- Do not apologise for your nervousness or any minor slipups that occur. Remain confident and continue with your presentation

- Do not end a presentation with the question-and-answer session—provide a brief summary of the key points after the question-and-answer session, then thank the attendees for their attention

## Tips for Presentation Slides

- Follow the "6x6" rule - no more than six bullet points per slide and no more than six words per bullet point.
- Do not use full sentences in your slides. Stick to short phrases and keywords instead.
- Never drop below 18-point font size and choose a bold, simple font, such as Arial.
- Select a font color that contrasts sharply with the background.
- Avoid distracting the audience with too much animation or clip art.
- Do not use too many different slide transition effects as your audience would be anticipating the next animation to pop up instead of concentrating on the content of your presentation
- Consider putting tables and graphs on handouts as it may be too small to analyse on a slide.
- If you wish to distribute copies of your presentation slides, do it at the end of the presentation to avoid participants from reading ahead or reading while you are presenting.
- Keep a copy of the slides in front of you, so you do not need to turn your back on the audience to look at the slides.

# Nail That Job!

## Top Tips for New Dietitians

Congratulations, you have successfully cleared all academic hurdles and you are now at the starting line of the job-hunting race. Just like all other rapidly growing professions, dietetics is a competitive field. This should not discourage you, in fact you should be motivated to prove yourself as the cream of the crop and land the job of your preference at an organisation where you can shine and contribute the skills and knowledge you have gained.

By the time you graduate, you should have a fair idea as to what type of environment you would like to work in – be it in a hospital, community clinic or private organisation. In addition to that, it is advisable to ignore the temptation to sit idle and relax for too long. This is a race after all, so let's get a great kick-start to your job-hunting!

### 1 Broaden Your Horizons

The usual type of career that most dietetic graduates think of is a clinical dietitian in a hospital. Try not to limit yourself. Like an artist's palette, the world of dietetics offers many colourful career options. Dietitians are also needed in organisations and industries such as nutrition companies, food services, research projects, food manufacturing companies, restaurants, gyms, dialysis centres, nutrition communications, geriatric care and private schools. We are fortunate that our profession has a broad scope of practice, so explore your options to find where your true passion lies.

### 2 ACTIVELY Look For A Job

Apart from constantly keeping a watch on online job search portals, do keep a lookout on the job vacancies posted up on the MDA Website. We have an average of two vacancies posted up a week. You can also always just send your CV to the companies that you would like to work for. Even if they do not have a vacancy rightaway, they can keep your record in their database for future posts. Also, get your foot through the door when an opportunity arises. For example, if you are aiming for a career in research but no vacancies are available at the moment, you can start off by being a contract-based research assistant in a university. This way, you increase the chances of being hired as a permanent employee should a vacancy open up later.

### 3 Power Of Networking

Join MDA and get to know the senior dietitians. You will not only learn a great deal from their experiences but you will also increase your chances of being hired when you become a familiar face to them. Networking these days is also made easy thanks to the power of Facebook, Twitter and other social networking websites. Get on Facebook, join the MDA Group and keep yourself active there. You might just network your way to landing a job.

### 4 Market Yourself – Be Versatile!

Versatility is what employers look for in a candidate. It is definitely a bonus if you have additional skills such as designing, writing or even basic accounting. Knowing extra languages also make you stand out from the other candidates. Many would ask, "How would I market myself if I am not even called for interview?" This brings us to the next tip...

### 5 Become A Volunteer

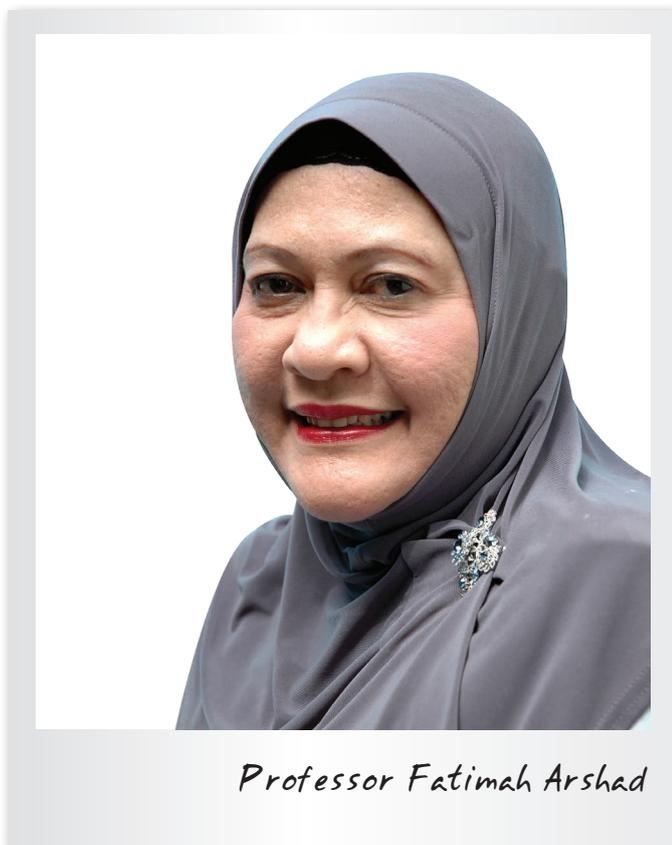
There are many opportunities for you to become a volunteer. MDA, for example, always welcomes volunteers for various events and activities. Volunteering not only enhances your personal skills, but also adds value to your CV. Apart from volunteering with relevant organisations, you can also approach any organisation and offer free services such as nutrition screening. By doing this, you are enlightening them about the importance of your knowledge as a dietitian. During this process, you might even be creating a vacancy for yourself – if the organisation finds your contribution vital, they would want to hire you.

### 5 Prepare An Effective Resume

Your resume or CV should portray your professionalism. Avoid spelling errors and lengthy essays. List everything in short bullet point format so it looks neat and tidy. Attach a pleasant looking photograph to give the employer an idea of what you look like. Revise your resume before sending it to any organisation to suit to the type of job position you are applying for. Do not send the same resume to all organisations as this comes across as lack of professionalism and enthusiasm. Attach a cover letter if you are sending by post or a short introduction if you are applying via e-mail. Last but not least, do your research on the expected salary as you do not want to put off your potential employer with too high of a demand, neither should you settle for less than you deserve.

Best wishes from Diet Link on the pursuit of your first job!

# Professor Fatimah Arshad



*Professor Fatimah Arshad*

*This month, we had the honour of getting to know a renowned figure in the Malaysian dietetics scene, Professor Fatimah Arshad PhD (UBC, Canada), MSc, BSc (LSU, USA), PgD Dietetics (MSc Eq, King's College, London), UKSRD. A Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics at the International Medical University (IMU), she has also recently been made the Head of Nutrition and Dietetics, a new department in the university. Read on to find out about her contributions and achievements, her thoughts on the dietetics graduates and her hopes and dreams for Malaysian dietitians.*

Professor Fatimah started her career in dietetics way back in 1976 as a lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). Her leadership skills, capabilities and experience earned her the position as the first Head of Department of Dietetics (now known as Department of Nutrition and Dietetics) from 1993 to 1999 in the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, UKM. Besides teaching Nutrition and Dietetics to undergraduate nutrition, dietetics, and medical students, she also supervised Master's and PhD scholars. Throughout the years, she has headed more than 10 national research projects, was the co-researcher of more than 20 research projects and has also written at least 50 articles for both national and international journals.

In accordance with her shining performance as an academician, Professor Fatimah's leadership was acknowledged when she was elected as the first President of the Malaysian Dietitians' Association (MDA) - a post she held from 1993 to 1999. She has also held positions in other professional associations, namely the President of the Asian Federation of Dietetics Association (AFDA) from 2002 to 2006 and was the Malaysian Representative to the International Congress of Dietetic Association (ICDDA). She initiated the Parental and Enteral Nutrition Association of Malaysia (PENSMA) and was

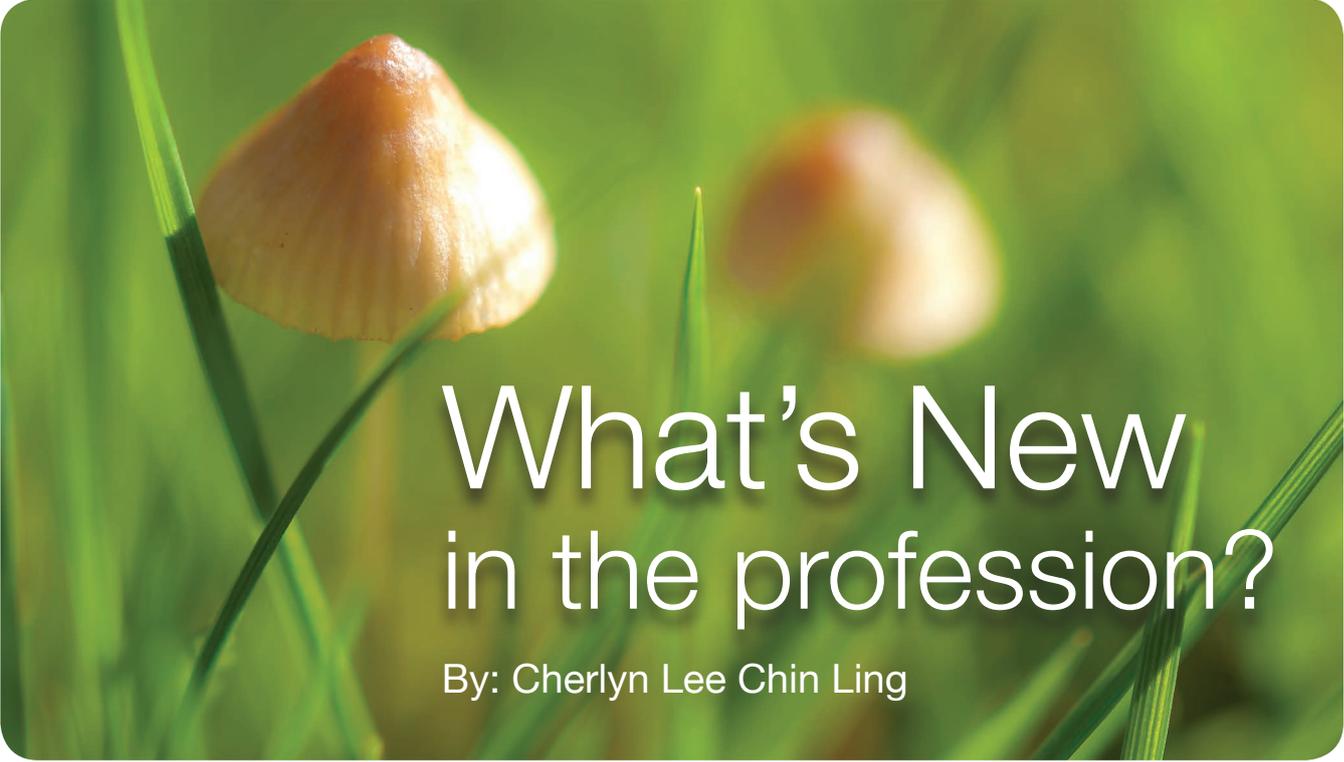
its first president from 1994 to 1999. Professor Fatimah is also a founder member of both the Malaysian Association of the Study of Obesity (MASO) and the Nutrition Society of Malaysia (NSM). Her outstanding achievements in the Asian region was recognised when she was awarded the 1st Asian Dietitians Award at the 2nd Asian Congress of Dietetics in Korea, 1994. Her vast experience and knowledge in dietetics has also served the public as she has written five books as well as produced five video clips with 150 episodes on diet for diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, healthy eating, healthy recipes and behavior modification in obesity.

Given her impressive and outstanding achievements, we could not resist to probe further for some advice in regards to a dietitian's career growth. Professor Fatimah strongly advises dietetic graduates to be versatile, able to multitask, and most importantly, have a passion for dietetics as these are the qualities that organisations look for in dietitians. It is also crucial for a dietitian to have core values such as empathy as our job involves constant interaction with patients. The increasing number of local universities offering dietetics degrees is not only raising the competitive bar in the job market but also creating speculations on which university produces the best dietitians. Professor Fatimah disagrees that certain universities produce better dietitians than their competitors. In her opinion, each university has their own strengths. She added that both IQ and EQ are like two wheels of a cart and should be incorporated in any undergraduate training module. Having said that, Professor Fatimah strongly believes that universities with innovative education programmes are able to train dietitians which are more sought after in the market. For example, she shared how IMU's module promotes active learning, rather than passive learning, by encouraging students to be involved in debates, seminars, field trips, community work, problem based learning, reflective learning and projects. This instills critical thinking skills, creativity, and the sense of teamwork among dietetic students - all of which are important for a dietitian to excel at their workplace. As a teacher, her satisfaction comes from watching her students grow and seeing them graduate as dietitians who are fully equipped with these skills. At the end of the day, it is the extensiveness of dietetic programmes offered at universities as well as the initiative of the individual that determines the quality of a dietetic graduate.

Professor Fatimah agrees that the competition in the job market for a dietitian is high and she does not see anything wrong if a dietetic graduate works in a field unrelated to the dietetic field, especially if they are unable to land a job related to their qualifications. In her opinion, it is good to accumulate working experience, regardless of the industry or organisation one works in. However, she urges dietitians to constantly practice what they have learnt throughout their four-year course in university in order to not lose touch of their dietetics skills and knowledge.

As we came to the end of the interview, Professor Fatimah spoke about hoping to witness a revolution of dietetics in our country. She looks forward to seeing Malaysian dietitians become more IT-savvy as this increases productivity. For example, using a nutrition software for nutrition assessment produces results faster compared to the present method of plunging figures into calculators. Her vision for MDA, an association which is very dear to her, is to see it being recognised by the International Congress of Dietitians, which will put us on par with the other successful dietetics associations in the international arena.

Diet Link would like to thank Professor Fatimah for her time and valuable words of wisdom. We strongly believe that her contribution and experience is an inspiration to all ambitious and aspiring dietitians.



# What's New in the profession?

By: Cherlyn Lee Chin Ling

## FODMAPs

*For our clients suffering from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), symptoms such as chronic abdominal pain, gas, bloating, diarrhea, or constipation can greatly impact their quality of life. Dr. Susan Joy Shepherd, fondly known as Dr Sue Shepherd, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Medicine, Monash University, Australia, and leading expert in IBS recently discovered that FODMAPs are the culprit of GI discomfort symptoms. She then developed the low FODMAP diet to elevate the painful symptoms of IBS.*

For many years, the ingestion of fatty acids, alcohol, gluten and caffeine is thought to be related to the symptoms of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). IBS is characterised as a gastrointestinal disorder which exhibits symptoms such as lower abdominal discomfort and pain, bloating, excessive passage of wind, distension and altered bowel habit (diarrhoea and / or constipation).

**FODMAPs** is an acronym for:

**F**ermentable  
**O**ligosaccharides (eg. Fructans and Galactans)  
**D**isaccharides (eg. Lactose)  
**M**onosaccharides (eg. excess Fructose)  
**a**nd  
**P**olyols (eg. Sorbitol, Mannitol, Maltitol, Xylitol and Isomalt).

FODMAPs are different classes of carbohydrates found in the food we eat, mainly from dairy, certain fruits and vegetables, some additives and sweeteners. These can be poorly absorbed by some people. When the molecules are poorly absorbed in the small intestine, these molecules travel along the digestive tract, arriving at the large intestine, where they act as a food source to the bacteria that usually live there.

The bacteria then digest/ferment these FODMAPs and this causes the nasty symptoms of IBS.

Dr Sue Shepherd has proven, through her pioneering PhD research, that limiting dietary FODMAPs is an effective treatment for people with symptoms of IBS. More recently, researchers at King's College London found that the low FODMAP diet, in contrast to standard diet therapy for IBS management, showed improved overall symptom response in 86% of participants compared with 49% in the standard diet group.

Malabsorption of FODMAP can be detected via the Hydrogen breath test. The rise in hydrogen or methane confirms that test sugars consisting fructose, lactose or sorbitol has been malabsorbed after ingestion, hence triggering symptoms of IBS. However, this test is not available in Malaysia as yet. Therefore, complete restriction of foods containing FODMAP with re-challenge under dietitian guidance is recommended. It is strongly recommended for the low FODMAP diet to be trialled for a period of 6 – 8 weeks followed with review by the dietitian to determine if it is effective.

The findings of this research are valuable information which will be useful in our clinical practice as dietitians when managing patients with IBS.

For more details, visit  
<http://shepherdworks.com.au/disease-information/low-fodmap-diet>

**Diet Support Staff Competency Training****Date:** 13th - 14th October 2012**Venue:** Loh Guan Lye Specialists Centre, Penang**11th CPD 'Diabetes Asia 2012  
Conference & Workshop****Date:** 17th - 21st October 2012**Venue:** Hotel Istana, Kuala Lumpur**2nd HKL Burn & Wound Workshop****Date:** 18th - 19th October 2012**Venue:** Dermatology Auditorium, Hospital Kuala Lumpur**1st Cardiac Rehabilitation Conference****Date:** 2nd - 3rd November 2012**Venue:** IJN Auditorium, Kuala Lumpur**Sports Nutrition Course (SNC)****Date:** 5th - 8th November 2012**Venue:** Commonwealth Hall, National Sports Council,  
Bukit Jalil Kuala Lumpur**Nutrition & Metabolism Refresher Course****Date:** 10th - 14th December 2012**Venue:** Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur

For more information on these or other events, please log on to <http://dietitians.org.my/category/events/>



## Announcements...

**1 New Council Members**

MDA would like to thank all those who had responded to the call by our President to join the council. We are glad to announce our new Council members, Ms.Rozanna M. Rosly and Ms.Ng Yee Voon. Congratulations and welcome on board the MDA Council.

**2 Looking for Writers**

Have a passion for writing and dream of having your work published? MDA is looking for writers to contribute to the articles bank for the MDA website. You can earn CPD points for your contribution too! Contact Izianti Tajuddin via email at [izianti@gmail.com](mailto:izianti@gmail.com) for more information.

**3 Special MDA Members Only Benefit**

Did you know, an Annual subscription to EAL is USD\$400 per year? Now it is **ABSOLUTELY FREE!**

The Malaysian Dietitians' Association has subscribed to the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics' (formerly known as The American Dietetic Association) Evidence Analysis Library (EAL) as a special benefit to all our Ordinary & Student Members.

It's absolutely free! Just keep your MDA membership active to have continual access to the Evidence Analysis Library.

## WHAT IS EAL

Up-to-date, systematically reviewed evidence on nutrition and dietetic research at your fingertips - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Credible researched guidelines and information you can use in your daily practice.

Broaden and enhance your knowledge as a dietitian in your area of practice.

If you're already an MDA member with an active 2012 account, **VISIT US NOW!**

Not a member? Just go to [www.dietitians.org.my](http://www.dietitians.org.my) and click on "Be A Member" to sign up as a MDA Member. The membership fee is RM50 for Ordinary Member and RM20 for Student Member.