

Dear Student Experience Enhancement Fund (SEEF),

Thank you for the generous support, which makes the "Mastering Nutrition Support: A Workbook by Students for Students" project a reality. This project aims to create a comprehensive workbook that empowers students with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate real-life case scenarios in critical care, GI surgery, and perioperative nutrition. By immersing students in practical situations and encouraging active problem-solving, this workbook will bridge the gap between classroom learning and hands-on clinical application.

To develop this workbook for the course Clinical Nutrition 2, I was provided with a unique internship opportunity to immerse myself in real-life clinical nutrition scenarios and acquire practical skills essential for my future career as a dietitian. The \$2000 funding provided by SEEF was integral in facilitating my internship experience. It covered vital aspects including accommodation, meals, transportation, and materials, ensuring I could fully engage in the program.

Summary of Outcomes:

Throughout the internship, I successfully collected a total of 9 real-life cases, delving into parental nutrition, GI surgery nutrition, and perioperative nutrition, and developed 3 case studies with questions and answers. These cases not only expanded my theoretical knowledge but also enabled me to apply concepts in patient care settings. The experience underscored the importance of evidence-based practice, interdisciplinary collaboration, and patient-centred care. Through these real-world scenarios, I gained a deeper understanding of the clinical decision-making process, honed my analytical skills in assessing patient data, and enhanced my ability to design personalized nutrition interventions that consider the unique needs of each individual. Additionally, my simulated interactions with healthcare professionals and patients reinforced the significance of effective communication, empathy, and cultural sensitivity in delivering holistic care. This internship has equipped me with invaluable tools that will guide me as I embark on my journey as a compassionate and competent dietitian.

Reflective Feedback:

The internship was organized into two distinct parts, each contributing significantly to my professional development:

During the initial phase, I had the privilege of shadowing experienced dietitians in a hospital setting. This allowed me to witness firsthand the daily responsibilities, ethical considerations, and challenges faced by healthcare professionals. I was also given the opportunity to go through the assessment data, that are generally out of reach for nutrition and dietetics students, such as the fibrotic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing (FEES) report, DXA body composition report, and imaging report. Through selecting and recording these data, including medical history, treatment progress, and lab values, I gained insights into the holistic approach required for effective patient care.

The second phase of the internship involved analyzing the collected data and crafting comprehensive case studies. These studies encapsulated the complexities of clinical nutrition practice, providing me with the opportunity to apply my knowledge in creating evidence-based nutrition interventions as a reference answer for students. By comparing the recommendations from clinical guidelines with the real practice of the dietitian, I was surprised to find that the two do not align oftentimes. This discrepancy encouraged me to have my critical thinking and question the current practice, but it also highlights the importance to teach the student to adopt

evidence-based practice. Collaborative discussions with my supervisor, Dr. Gillis, further enriched my understanding and decision-making skills.

This journey was particularly highlighted by a case involving a post-Whipple procedure patient receiving total parenteral nutrition (TPN), which teaches me the critical importance of proper electrolyte management before initiating TPN to prevent refeeding syndrome. After analyzing the data on the patient's potassium levels, I discovered that they were not normalized before TPN commencement, resulting in erratic blood work values in subsequent days, possibly prolonging the patient's hospitalization. To address this issue, I consulted evidence-based guidelines from the ASPEN Adult Nutrition Book to determine an appropriate dosage of oral potassium supplement or intravenous infusion, to include as the suggested answer for the workbook. Additionally, I observed the significance of multidisciplinary collaboration, as the patient's difficulty with normal-texture food required the involvement of an occupational therapist for a swallowing evaluation in Quebec. Through this case, I learned the value of early intervention, interdisciplinary teamwork, and evidence-based decision-making in providing optimal patient care.

In conclusion, the "Mastering Nutrition Support: A Workbook by Students for Students" project has been a pivotal experience that has broadened my horizons and refined my skills as a future dietitian. It provided a comprehensive understanding of clinical nutrition practice and fostered my growth as a healthcare professional.

I am immensely grateful for the guidance of Dr. Chelsea Gillis, the support of the healthcare team of the Preoperative Clinic of Montreal General Hospital, and the opportunity to contribute to the field of clinical nutrition through this internship. The lessons learned, skills acquired, and values reinforced will undoubtedly shape my journey as I prepare to make a positive impact on patient health and well-being.

Sincerely,
Kelly







