Objectives:
A. Explain rationale for performing the nutrition-focused physical examination (NPE)
B. Design a plan for implementing the NPE in your acute care facility
C. Outline expectations for clinical dietitians to perform the NPE, as part of a comprehensive assessment

Outline:
I. Nutrition-focused Physical Examination (NPE)
A. Why perform?
B. What patients?
C. Linking to the nutrition history to find the cause of deficiency and to validate an observed lesion
D. Adding nutritionally related physical findings to other diagnostic criteria improves the validity of nutrition diagnoses, treatment and patient outcomes

II. Planning implementation of NPE procedure in an acute care facility
A. Standardizing NPE Activities
   a. Equipment
   b. Techniques/Skills
   c. Sequence of examination
   d. Safe environment (protective care hand washing)
B. Examination procedure – Perform in a logically sequenced order – examining from patient’s head to toe and from patient’s right side to patient’s left side
   a. Oral and perioral structures
   b. Skin and related structures
   c. Systems and miscellaneous
C. Examining for nutritionally related physical signs
   a. How lesions manifest
   b. Images of lesions: Filiform papillary atrophy & angular stomatitis of the oral/perioral area; Seborrheic dermatitis & petechiae of the skin
D. Documentation of observed lesions
   a. How do RDs document observed lesions?
   b. What a diagnostic (PES) statement might look like?

III. Getting started on implementation of NPE
a. Gap analysis / needs assessment
   “Where are we?” and "Where do we want to be?"
b. Steps to get to desired future state:
   i. Identify RD(s) with a strong commitment to performing the NPE and to researching pertinent library offerings
   ii. Develop a plan for education and clinical experiences
      1. Textbooks – get books with pictures of lesions; RDs get familiar with the lesions, proper naming (nomenclature), description and criteria for identifying and interpreting lesions
      2. Practice - first have RDs focus/learn the NPE technique and practice on each other – preferably under the guidance of a mentor
      3. Time - Provide time for library searches, and practice; use staff meetings to share experiences, learn and practice
   iii. Request privileges (write a short letter) from champion MDs to perform NPE on their patients, if needed
   iv. Re-design systems to support practice of the NPE (procedure)
   v. Conduct / Participate in Rounds
   vi. Study outcomes - use macro-photography to document lesions observed at baseline and after nutrient supplementation

IV. Summary
a. Value of performing the NPE
References


