Culinary Medicine for MS4s: Cooking, Confidence, Counseling, and Nutrition Knowledge

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Purpose

- Evaluate the impact of a two-week Culinary Medicine elective on medical students' attitudes, nutrition knowledge, culinary skills, and confidence in applying nutrition to clinical care
- Assess whether a hybrid (in-person + online) curriculum improves preparedness for patient-centered nutrition counseling
- Contribute outcomes data to support integration of culinary medicine in graduate medical education

Methods

- Pre–post questionnaire study of fourth-year medical students enrolled in a two-week Culinary Medicine elective at Keck School of Medicine from 2025-2026 cohort (total n=13, 7 students in 2025, 6 students in 2026)
- Voluntary, de-identified participation
- Outcomes measured using Health meets Food validated pre–post survey assessing attitudes, nutrition knowledge, and self-reported ability to apply evidence-based nutrition in clinical practice
- Paired pre–post comparisons analyzed using paired t-tests ($p < 0.05$)

Results

Figure 1. Questionnaire Results
(n=13, 7 students 2025, 6 students 2026)

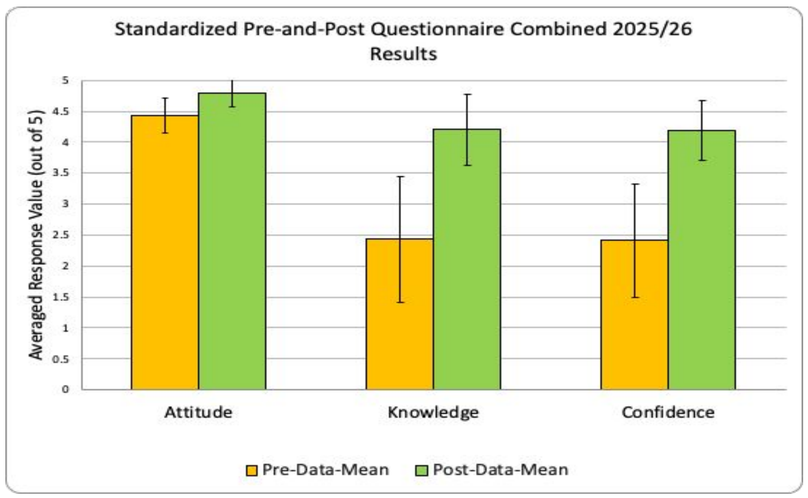

Table 1. Paired T-Test Pre-Post P-Values

	P-Value
Attitudes Towards Nutrition	0.001554
Nutritional Knowledge	0.000015
Confidence in Pt Nutrition Counseling	0.000036

Table 2. Sample Culinary Class Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM	Knife Handling and Kitchen Skills Lecture	Registered Dietitian Shadowing	HmF Module Prep	Field Trip	Grocery Store/WIC
PM	Standardized Patient Case and Motivational Interviewing Practice	Read Assigned Book	HmF Module In-Person Cooking Session	Read Assigned Book	HmF Module In-Person Cooking Session

Other Activities: virtual cooking class, pot-luck celebration, guest lectures, book discussion

Conclusion

- Two weeks of Culinary Medicine training significantly improved medical students' attitudes, nutrition knowledge, and confidence in applying nutrition in clinical practice.
- The largest gains were seen in nutrition knowledge and confidence, while attitudes improved upon an already favorable baseline.
- Culinary medicine may serve as an effective and scalable approach to address gaps in nutrition education within graduate medical education.

Future Directions

- Expanding sample size by enrolling additional student cohorts.
- Consider assessing long-term impact through a follow-up post-course surveys.
- Improving skill assessment by implementing objective measures of culinary competency at the start and end of the elective.

References

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