An Active Learning Assignment for Cultural Awareness, Nutrition and Public Health

Natalea Braden-Suchy, Pharm.D., BCACP, OHSU

Background
Obesity is increasing around the globe. In the United states 36.5% of adults are obese. Rates of obesity are affected by ethnicity and many other cultural factors.

The nutrition and lifestyle modifications required for diabetes, hypertension and hyperlipidemia are often covered in health care education programs. What is sometimes more difficult is learning how to translate this education in to a manner that is meaningful and useful to clients.

Goals and Objectives
The goal of this project is for the student(s) to learn about other cultures as well as create recipes which can be used as tools for future patient education encounters.

Methods
• Students were broken up into groups and randomly chose a region of the world. They then had to choose a country in that region.

• The assignment was to create a recipe, nutrition label and presentation on the country of their choice.

• The recipe had to include one source of protein and one additional element. They had to prepare the dish and share it during class.

• The nutrition label for the recipe had to meet FDA requirements. They were also to ensure that there were less than 500 mg of sodium and <55 gm of carbs per serving. In addition, the carb to fiber ration had to be 10:1 or better.

• The written/presentation portion included geographic/statistical information on the country, different cultural groups in the country, discussion of health concerns in the country, the cultural appropriateness of the recipe and the ability to be replicated locally.

• Additionally, they had to share and explain 3 do’s and 3 don’ts in terms of inter-personal interactions.

• Each student was also required to complete a self-reflection.

Impact and Effectiveness
• Students appreciated trying new foods

• Students became aware of the difficulty of adjusting recipes to make healthy alternatives

• Students understood the effects of culture and agriculture on diet

• Students compared and contrasted public health issues in various countries

• Students gained empathy for clients with various disease that require therapeutic lifestyle changes

• Students gained an understanding of health care systems in other countries