

DIETITIAN'S CORNER

Building Global Relationships - Corrections “Down Under”

By Barbara Wakeen, MA, RD, LD, CCFP & Sally Macqueen, BSc, BNutrDiet, MCouns, APD



This winter I had the opportunity to meet one of our member dietitians from “down under”, **Sally Macqueen**, from Brisbane, Australia. Sally consults in Corrections in Australia for both adult and juvenile facilities. We met in person

during one of her trips to the US and again in Brisbane, where I visited Sally during part of my ‘holiday’ this spring to Australia and Papua New Guinea.

As part of my ‘holiday’, I took the opportunity to seek out the local correctional facilities - my successes were in Kavieng, Papua New Guinea and in Brisbane, Australia. Unfortunately, my only contact at the Papua New Guinea facility was a view from the entrance and a couple photographs. There was no security or corrections officers at the entrance to assist in my endeavors of a visit. Although there were no fences to deter a free entrance, using my better judgment, I opted to not venture into the compound unescorted.

In Brisbane, Sally scheduled a site visit at one of the facilities for which she consults - Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre (AGCC). She and I met with the foodservice director for a lengthy period which led to a delightful meeting with administrative staff as well. I think we were all equally excited to meet and share operational information. We had an interesting discussion comparing operations across the world.

The terms “jails” and “prisons” in Australia don’t appear to be differentiated as they are in the US. My queries and research indicates the terms seem to be used interchangeably in both discussion and writing. The facilities are titled as “correctional centres” or “prisons”, housing all types of offenders - males, females or both: sentenced and unsentenced: at minimum, medium and/or maximum security levels. Other types of facilities are pre-release, remand, community corrections and detention centres (both adult and juvenile).

Standards and Guidelines

Australia has minimum standards for correctional foodservice just as we do in the US - *Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia 2004*. They are general, to the point and do include foodservice/nutrition-related guidelines.

Foodservice standards for corrections in Australia reference...

Food and Water

“Every prisoner should be provided with continuous access to clean drinking water and with nutritional food adequate for health and well being, at the usual hours prepared in accordance with the relevant health standards...”

“...Special dietary food should be provided where it is established such food is necessary for medical reasons, on account of a prisoner’s religious beliefs, because the prisoner is a vegetarian, or where the prisoner has other reasonable, special needs.”

Source: <http://www.aic.gov.au/research/corrections/standards/aust-stand.html>, Accessed 6/15/05

Standards are defined for juveniles as well. *Standards for Juvenile Custodial Facilities*, Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators, Revised Edition, 1999 can be referenced at: <http://www.aic.gov.au/research/corrections/standards> Accessed 6/16/05

To date there aren’t accrediting agencies such as ACA or NCCHC. There are facility foodservice certifications such as HACCP Certification and Total Quality Certification Services. Other foodservice inspections are conducted by the city agencies.

Nutritional Perspective

With respect to nutritional guidelines, we found the guidelines in North America and Australia to be very similar. The nutritional recommendations used in Australia are based on National Health & Medical Research Centre guidelines, which were released in 1991 and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. These are currently under review, with the new guidelines entitled ‘*National Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand including Recommended Dietary Intakes*’ expected to be released in October, 2005.

Current Australian guidelines used for total energy contribution and nutrient recommendations:

- Carbohydrate 50 - 55%
- Protein 15% - 20%
- Fat 30 - 35%
- Saturated Fat (National Heart Foundation recommendation) - less than 10%
- Cholesterol 300 mg
- Sodium recommended upper limit 2,300 mg per day
- Calcium 800mg per day
- Dietary fibre recommended minimum of 30 grams per day

In general, most Centres' menus tend to exceed recommendations for saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium. The Dietitian's efforts are often centred on finding suitable alternatives that meet not only the dietary targets, but inmate acceptance and budgetary constraints.

Menu Analysis

There a number of nutritional analysis programmes available in Australia, with one of the most comprehensive and user-friendly being, FoodWorks. Sally uses this programme to analyse the data at the Centres she consults to. Comparisons are made with the Recommended Dietary Intakes (RDI'S) for a population based on data provided. A reference person is used as a standard of comparison which usually reflects the average age and activity level of the institution. For example, at the AGCC, an 'average prisoner' used for reference purposes is a 25-year old Caucasian male, 170 cm (5' 7") in height, weighing 75 kg (165lbs.), performing light activities only.

Nutrients routinely analysed include:

- Energy(Calories)
- Carbohydrate
- Fat (Including Saturated, Monounsaturated And Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids)
- Cholesterol
- Water
- Protein
- Dietary Fibre
- Minerals - Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium and Zinc

- Vitamins - Thiamine, Riboflavin, Niacin, Niacin Equivalents, Folate, Vitamin A, including Retinol and B-Carotene, Vitamin C

'Standard' food items from the nutritional analysis programme are used to approximate the nutritional value of mixed dishes where specific recipe data is not available.

The Dietitian's Role

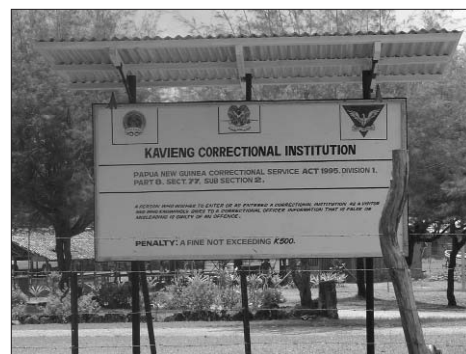
Through our discussion we found that Sally's experiences as a corrections dietitian mirrors those of corrections dietitians in North America:

1. Represent a minority in our field.
2. Roles vary depending on the agency we represent.
3. Make recommendations to standardize menus, diets, etc. Often it is a challenge for administration to act on recommendations, with costs often causing the delay.
4. Ensure compliance with standards and policies.
5. Ensure nutritional adequacy of menus via computerized nutritional analysis.
6. Review and approve menus annually and/or semi annually and make recommendations as needed.
7. May or may not write menus. Sometimes this is performed by other foodservice personnel.
8. Write medical diets or provide guidance for diets as requested.

Typical therapeutic diets include the following types:

- Low fat
- Diabetic
- Vegetarian
- Lactose-free
- Soft
- Religious (Muslim)
- Allergy (which may in some Centres accommodate food preference through lack of standards on dealing with allergies)
- Gluten-free

As exhibited here, dietitians and food-service personnel face the same challenges on opposite sides of the world.



Sally will be joining the Nutrition Professionals Panel at the 2005 ACFSA International Conference to share more about correctional foodservice "down under".

Other News from "Down Under"

In response to an ACFSA query from Victoria, Australia, I have been communicating with **Steven Comte**, Industry Officer - Correctional Caterer (foodservice director) at the Lodden Prison in Victoria. Our discussion has been in reference to the development of a Correctional Caterers organization in Australia, similar to ACFSA and building a relationship between the two organizations. Australia correctional caterers are trying to standardize practices and open the communication between their provinces in Australia and New Zealand, and US correctional practices as well.

Australian Correctional Caterers held their first **National Prison Caterers Conference** in May (Sally and I attempted attending this, but were unsuccessful due to scheduling) with attendance from across Australia and New Zealand. They are on their way to standardizing their operations and purchasing, with plans for a web site and a directory. We hope this communication develops into an expanded international relationship between ACFSA and Australian Correctional Caterers.

MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

ACFSA International Conference Dietitians in Corrections Networking Luncheon

Monday August 15, 2005
Time and location to be announced.

National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) National Conference

October 8 - 12, 2005
Las Vegas, Nevada
For more information visit
www.ncchc.org.

American Dietetic Association (ADA) FNCE

St. Louis, Missouri
October 22 - 25, 2005
Corrections Sub-unit Meeting - time
and date to be announced.

Past Dietitians Corner articles may be
viewed on the ACFSA web site -
www.acfsa.org.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

If you would like to be added to the Dietitians in Corrections networking EML, please email me directly at bwakeen@neo.rr.com. This is an informal discussion group and your name/email address will be listed in each email sent to the group.

If you are interested in joining the CD-HCF Corrections Sub-unit, contact me directly at bwakeen@neo.rr.com. ADA membership and CD-HCF membership are required to participate. If you are already a member and want to subscribe the Corrections Sub-unit EML or be listed in the directory, visit the CD-HCF web site at www.cdchcf.org/subunits.

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