

## Title

**Hospital Food Transition: Institutional factors influencing policy change towards a plant forward diet.**

## Problem statement

Food has an enormous potential to improve both patient, employee and planetary health(1). However, hospitals have been reluctant to adopt dietary policies (2,3). The data supporting such healthy and planet-friendly dietary changes are unequivocal. Red meat is associated with adverse health effects, such as gastrointestinal cancer. Western-type diet, i.e. a diet that is high on saturated fatty acids, cholesterol and sugar, is main contributing factor of obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. In addition, ultra-processed foods are the latest discovered high risk factor for these diseases. From an ecological perspective, high consumption of animal-derived products and especially cow-derived products put a high strain on the environment through the amount of animal feed necessary, the methane production by cattle, nitrogen excretion in animal feces and land used for farming which reduces biodiversity.

A more healthy and ecologically sustainable diets contain no ultra-processed foods, more pulses, nuts and whole grains, fresh produce (fruit and vegetable) and unsaturated fats. While the promotion of fruit and vegetables has not been contested, the shift from meat and dairy to plant-based protein sources has met with resistance in care and cure institutions. Health care professionals, such as physicians, nurses and dietitians, have been supportive and instrumental in projects to move towards dietary changes (4,5). These initiatives have also shown that plant-based alternatives are readily commercially available. We hypothesize that the barriers might of a cultural and/or psychological of nature (6).



Figure 1: The planetary health diet (source <https://eatforum.org/learn-and-discover/the-planetary-health-diet/>)

The aim of this research project is to identify the institutional drivers that are specific for hospitals. One or multiple specific hospitals will serve as a case study, to investigate policy making aspects and barriers and strategies to adopt a plant-based dietary policy change.

## Research question(s)

What are the institutional factors that influences the adoption of a plant-based dietary policy?

1. Sub question: who are the stakeholders and what are their roles?
2. Sub question: what is the current dietary policy or policies?
3. Sub question: what is the value-case for a planetary healthy diet (i.e. cost- vs health benefit, ecological benefit)
4. Sub question: what strategy to change hospital dietary policy?

## Expected type of work

Work could include but is not limited to: stakeholder analysis, literature review, interviews, value-case, environmental impact analysis

## Remarks

We invite students to refine the research question as needed and fitting to their interest and study background and subsequently design the optimal research design.

## References

- Eat Lancet website: <https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/eat-lancet-commission-summary-report/>
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