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FACTORS THAT AFFECT CAREER MOBILITY
AMONG MICHIGAN'S PROFESSIONALLY
QUALIFIED DIETITIANS

By

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ABSTRACT

FACTORS THAT AFFECT CAREER MOBILITY AMONG MICHIGAN'S PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED DIETITIANS

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The purpose of this study was to identify some of reasons why professionally qualified dietitians who reside in Michigan reveal the professional profiles they do. A random sample of 200 Michigan dietitians who were 1973 members of the American Dietetic Association was selected for study. The data gathering device chosen for this study was the mail back questionnaire which was designed to obtain descriptive information pertaining to career mobility. Analysis of the survey data was based on the 160 (80.0%) who were willing to participate.

Findings from this investigation imply that there is need for the American Dietetic Association and educators to study current and future trends in employment developments--particularly concerning the increase in the number of women returning to the labor force.

Evidence of increased labor force participation among adult women suggest that the American Dietetic Association should: (a) become more cognizant of the

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unemployed dietetic professionals who want to return to professional employment, (b) determine the requirements of unemployed dietitians for return to work, (c) make adaptive efforts, whenever and wherever possible, to change and/or liberalize the present qualifying systems to enable unemployed professionals to meet the required needs for return to work, and (d) selectively and effectively communicate such needs to those professions and/or related disciplines from which cooperation and assistance is needed.

In all cases the users of each of the twelve methods of locating employment, commonly available to dietitians, had experienced positive results (1-3 job offers). However, findings with regard to opportunities for qualified professionals to learn about professional job vacancies in the field of dietetics, imply that more effective means of informing dietitians about such vacancies should be developed.

The findings from this study also imply that lateral positional mobility, reportedly a common occurrence among dietetic professionals, should be viewed as a positive asset to employing institutions. It seems reasonable to refute existing folklore that immobilizes the professionally qualified dietitian and to sanction career mobility.

Most frequently, professional dietitians leave the labor force to accommodate or fulfill family obligations and will eventually seek re-entry into the labor force. There is need for educational institutions and professional

societies to develop innovative teaching and learning methods, such as self-instructional programs, that can simultaneously extend higher education alternatives to pursuants of dietetic careers as well as provide unemployed dietetic professionals with optimal means to prepare themselves for successful re-entry into the field.

From this study it is apparent that employers need to make a concerted effort to improve career advancement opportunities for dietitians and to make better use of their capabilities to retain their professional services. This can be accomplished best by eliminating as many unnecessary obstacles to career advancement and job change as possible, so long as activities are consistent with the maintenance of adequate professional standards.

The highest concentration of job responsibilities, by the majority of professionals participating in this study, was in direct patient services. There was some evidence that employment opportunities for dietitians as consultants are increasing and that dietetic positions involving direct patient services are available and attractive to active practitioners.

Only a few of the survey participants were of the opinion they had been denied consideration for a better or different position by their respective employers. This finding suggests that within many institutions the levels of professional expertise needed to provide essential

dietary services are limited, and within their organizational frameworks, their real need is to employ a sufficient number of qualified dietitians to meet the volume of specialized and/or individualized dietary services required by their respective clienteles.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In January of 1970, the Commission on Dietetics was formed upon the joint request of the Executive Board of the American Dietetic Association and the Governing Board of the American Dietetic Association Foundation to study all aspects of dietetic practice, education and professional organization. After nearly two years of comprehensive study, the Commission reported its findings and recommendations to the American Dietetic Association and its Foundation (25).

According to the Study Commission, there is a great deal of discussion about shortages of health professionals and dietitians are not exceptions. Evidence provided by the Commission indicates that the number of available dietitians are insufficient to meet the needs for dietetic services now and in the foreseeable future. Hospital administrators report difficulty in recruiting therapists and government agencies report a 20 percent vacancy of budgeted positions for dietitians.

As reviewed by the Study Commission, the national supply of dietary professionals currently practicing

numbers 30,000 individuals and, of these, 16,000 (53.5%) are members of the American Dietetic Association. In December 1971, analysis of the 23,000 members of the Association revealed that of the 16,000 practicing members, 67 percent were engaged in dietetic activity involving direct patient services, 25 percent were employed as managers of quantity food services, and 8 percent were involved in teaching, research, production and development. Seven thousand (30.4%) of the association's members in 1971 were professionally inactive.

Predictions of the Study Commission indicate that dietetic practice in the future will be altered by changes in the expectations of society and by demands in the modifications of health care delivery systems. By 1980, the Commission estimates there will be need for an additional 25,000 dietitians in clinical practice, and an additional 7,500 dietitians in food service management.

Members of the dietetic profession have sought and are continually seeking means to provide quality services, despite the limited number of professionals available. One way to attempt to alleviate the current shortage is to concentrate on recruiting dietitians who have left the profession and/or those who, for a variety of personal reasons, may have completed their formal education and training but never entered the profession. This approach, although sound and often fruitful, necessitates the completion of refresher

courses to update professional knowledge and dietary practices to insure successful entry or re-entry into the field. For some, the time and activities required to attain professional entry may be personally impractical.

In addition to recruitment, concerted efforts must also be made to extend the services of dietitians currently employed. Moreover, the current systems of educating and training individuals for entry into and advancement within the profession are in need of serious review to identify and activate changes in the systems which will attract more persons to the field and encourage retention of those already in the field.

In November 1972, 896 Michigan members of the American Dietetic Association were surveyed concerning their professional employment status. Findings from this study were strikingly similar to those reported in the national study by the Commission on Dietetics. Of the 832 members who responded to the Michigan inquiry, 628 (75.5%) were actively working in the field of dietetics, and 204 (24.5%) were not. Of those who were in active practice, 62 percent were engaged in dietetic activity involving direct patient services, 24 percent were employed as managers of quantity food services and 14 percent were involved in teaching, research, production and development (2).

Relatively little is known about the factors which influence qualified dietitians to change positions within the field or to leave the profession. Identification of these factors and their relative influence on individuals would provide insight for educators who are concerned with increasing the supply of dietitians and employers who are in need of expanding their dietary services but are finding it difficult to employ qualified professionals to adequately support their needs.

The purpose of this study was to attempt to identify some of the reasons why professionally qualified dietitians who reside in Michigan reveal the professional employment profiles they do. The primary objectives of the mail survey were to:

1. To extrapolate and identify those variables that contribute to the professional inactivity of Michigan members of the American Dietetic Association.
2. To identify those factors that contribute to the diverse mobility of Michigan members of the American Dietetic Association.

The underlying assumption for the design of the questionnaire was that the central problem of career mobility is that employment of dietitians leads to a cul-de-sac which offers minimal recompense for experience, intelligence and energy, and that better utilization of employed

dietitians depends largely upon improving career advancement.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following definitions were adopted:

1. Dietitian: A professionally trained person who translates the science of nutrition into the skill of furnishing optimal nourishment to people, no matter what their role or the purpose of the employing institution (25).
2. Pure Positional Mobility: An emergence from one position to another within the same institution (11).
3. Assignment Mobility: To remain in the same position with additional special or task force assignments within the same institution. Often substituted for positional mobility (11).
4. Lateral Positional Mobility: An emergence from one position to a similar one in a different institution (11).
5. Super-mobile: One who becomes a department head before the age of 40 in either the same institution or in a different institution (11).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Labor Force Participation

There is a great deal of discussion about shortages of dietitians as reported in 1972 by the Study Commission on Dietetics. At the time of the study there were over 30,000 individuals practicing dietetics and, of these, approximately 16,000 were members of The American Dietetic Association. The Association had about 23,000 members, thus, indicating that 7,000 members of the Association were not in active practice. In the judgment of the Commission members, the number of professionally active dietitians was insufficient to meet the needs for dietetic service in 1972 and in the foreseeable future (25).

In an earlier study (1963) the shortage of professionally qualified dietitians was recognized by Tatge (26). Conclusions of this study suggested that during the next five to ten years the estimated demand for dietitians would greatly exceed the current annual rate of supply.

Future Needs for Dietetic Services

According to the Study Commission on Dietetics (25), in the area of clinical practice the demand for therapeutic

dietitians will increase. This growth will be in response to a growing population, a greater equality of access to medical care for all social and economic groups, and the discovery that more and more illness and disabilities are related to nutritional problems.

The Commission further stated that, although it is more difficult to make predictions in the area of food service management, there are signs that the dietitians as a food service manager is being challenged to a degree not experienced by the therapeutic dietitians. Home economists are trained in quantity cooking and management as are dietitians, graduates of hotel and restaurant management schools are appearing in growing numbers, and more hospitals are contracting with commercial food service firms. In such firms, management positions may be filled by both dietitians and other professionals of quite a different training and experience. Although the dietitian may not be essential for all food service management positions, the field does involve translating the science of nutrition with the overall objective of providing optimal nourishment to people. To these investigators it seemed that the number of dietitians required as food service managers would remain nearly constant, hence, the Commission estimated future need for food service managers at the current level of 7,500. The needs in food service management can perhaps be best met by the dietitian as a

consultant and not bogged down in the day-to-day minutiae of operating a very complex system.

Commercial firms employ dietitians in a large variety of activities, ranging from management to product and technique development. However, their activities are largely shaped by the nature of the commercial enterprise which employs them. As the enterprise changes, the number of dietitians employed and the tasks they perform will also change. Increasing urbanization, growing industrialization, and the nation becoming more sensitive to the question of both the purity and the nutritional value of the food which it buys will bring further commercialization to the food industry. The demand will be for manpower with greater skill and capabilities rather than for increased numbers of individuals.

In the view of the Commission, it seemed likely that the need for research dietitians will increase markedly as the importance of nutrition in human growth and development, in the prevention of disease, and in the maintenance of health is recognized. Furthermore, participation of dietitians with experience in the area of mass education and communication is essential for the purpose of accurately translating new knowledge as it relates to the importance of nutrition and health. Perhaps this specific need for professional dietitians can be met by a few hundred properly trained individuals. However, future manpower needs in

these areas may prove these estimations grossly conservative because they are dependent upon expansion of the educational system and the ability of the dietetic profession to recruit and prepare increased numbers of qualified practitioners (25).

Why Do These Shortages Exist?

In order to gain insight as to why these shortages exist, at least three questions come to mind. Why do some persons who successfully complete dietetic internships or traineeships fail to find employment in the field of dietetics? Of those who actually achieve employment in the field of dietetics, why do many leave the field for other types of employment or elect to become unemployed? Why are not more college students majoring in dietetics? The literature contains a few references concerning this perplexing problem.

The findings reported in 1971 by Sanford, McKinley, and Scruggs (20) from their investigation of the employment status of 561 recent dietetic internship graduates revealed that 108 (19.3%) had either already left the field of dietetics or after completion of their pre-planned training, had never entered the field. Of these 80 (74.1%) indicated personal reasons, such as family responsibility or pregnancy, for leaving or not entering the labor force.

The most important factors that make dietitians leave the profession found by Kirk (13) in her 1959 study were:

- (a) Higher salaries are available outside the hospital field.
- (b) Dietitians believe that professional and personal advancement are either lacking or extremely limited.
- (c) Pressure and criticism are fairly constant. Rightly or not, many a dietitian rates her job as a thankless one in comparison with the acclaim given to other members of the hospital staff. Frequently, dietitians are not sufficiently recognized as highly trained professional personnel.
- (d) In large cities especially, the employment of low caliber kitchen employees results in a constant turnover of the labor force, and this in turn requires continuous retraining.
- (e) Although a 40-hour work week may be stipulated, longer hours are the rule. A dietitian's responsibilities require that she be away from home at meal times and this presents a problem for the married dietitian. Week-end and holiday duty is disliked.
- (f) Many dietitians must work under several administrators and, in addition, are on the receiving end of much unsolicited advice.
- (g) The constant meeting of deadlines, a necessary part of a dietitian's job, is a work feature that especially irks the younger dietitian.
- (h) The total independence of food processors today results in many incorrect or shorted orders--an additional frustration for the dietitian.

As to why more college students are not majoring in dietetics, findings reported in Kirk's 1959 study indicate five reasons that are still relevant today:

- (a) Dietetics is an unfamiliar field.
- (b) Information about the profession fails to reach groups at the appropriate age level.
- (c) The fifth year of internship training is a deterring factor.
- (d) Discouraging word-of-mouth publicity about hospital dietitians has had an unfortunate effect upon recruitment.
- (e) The rapidly rising rate of early marriages among college students is having an adverse effect upon the dietetics profession (13).

Data reported by Tatge (26) suggest that the dietetic profession is losing ground in its fundamental responsibility of recruitment whereas the nursing profession is consistently cited for success in recruitment, as well as attracting men. This is perhaps due to their contact with high school students, which is accomplished through teas, sorority rush parties, candy stripe programs, and to say the least, the time and money spent on recruitment. In part, these ingredients foster their success in attracting young people to the nursing profession. By comparison, dietitians are generally less aggressive--perhaps because they are less "clubby" than dedicated.

Other findings reported by Tatge (26) lend unified support to some of the other reasons cited regarding college students not majoring in dietetics. Hospital administrators believe that current efforts to attract high school students do not vaguely approximate a purposeful objective. For instance there are attempts to glamorize the profession--

this is impossible. Being a dietitian is hard work, requiring mental agility, patience, and a strong back. Another approach--appealing to a sense of dedication to one's fellow man and community--has missed the mark because it falls on the deaf ears of the younger generation.

This investigator (26) also compared the recruiting efforts of the nursing and the dietetics professions. Although both are allied health professions whose services are equally important to the functions of a health care team, the comparisons presented are not conclusive of either, one profession's failure (dietetics) or another's success (nursing). There are at least two fundamental differences which can be offered to explain this occurrence. It takes more education to become a registered dietitian--four to five years of study compared to the options of either a two; three; or four-year programs required to become a registered nurse.

Another possible difference is relativity of the length of time each profession has been in existence. According to the World Book Encyclopedia (16, 17) nurses were first organized in groups during early christianity although nursing, as we know it today, began in the 1850's. Interest in dietetics only began in the late 1800's.

The writings of West, Wood, and Harger (27) indicate that today, more often than not, nutritional care is provided by professionally qualified dietitians, however,

this aspect of dietetic practice is an outgrowth of a function that was traditionally performed by nurses--often shared with doctors.

Adjusting to the Shortages

In view of the reported shortages and future needs of dietetic professionals the literature contains numerous references which propose strategy to alleviate, cope with and/or adjust to this perplexing problem (25, 22, 13, 20, 9, 1, 14, 26, 3, 17).

To maintain high standards and to achieve the objectives of the profession, it is imperative that competent people be attracted to and retained in the field. Sound employment practices, salaries commensurate with education and responsibilities, and good employment conditions are essential for recruitment. In addition, upgrading employment and salary standards will be an incentive for more effective utilization of present manpower. In 1971 The American Dietetic Association (11) recommended standards for salaries and employment conditions for its members. These guidelines, developed for use by members of the Association and by their employers, should help to improve the practice of the profession.

As early as 1959, eight suggestions and comments were received by Kirk (13) when dietitians offered advice on what hospitals could do to gain and retain their professional dietetic personnel:

- (a) Hospitals should attempt to increase the salaries of hospital dietitians so that these salaries are commensurate with professions requiring five years of pre-study.
- (b) Every attempt should be made to develop better interdepartmental relationships.
- (c) Hospital administrators might consider the advantage of allowing more time off-duty to enable dietitians to attend conferences, workshops and professional conventions.
- (d) The present experiment with food service supervisors and dietary clerks should help relieve the hospital dietitian of routine tasks which now often prevent her from fulfilling her major responsibilities.
- (e) Many dietitians in the U.S. Army and in Veterans Administration hospitals are apparently more content than those employed elsewhere.
- (f) Many college students who expect later to qualify as dietitians seek summer employment in hospital dietary departments.
- (g) Hospitals and medical groups might well consider the advantage of offering scholarships to persons interested in pursuing dietetic internship training after graduation from a college in their particular area.
- (h) Hospital administrators and dietetic associations should not lose sight of the fact that there is keen competition from other fields for the services of career-minded home economists.

These suggestions and comments strongly assert that hospitals and colleges can accomplish more when they work together--a cooperative spirit is a strong force for successful achievement.

Unemployed professionals stated three requirements for their return to the work force: (a) refresher workshops, (b) flexible working hours, and (c) adequate babysitting arrangements (22).

The most important efforts to alleviate the shortage of dietitians, as expressed by Hubbard and Donaldson (10), must be in the area of extending the services of dietitians currently practicing. This concept involves developing and exploring career ladders within dietetics in order to fully utilize support personnel when possible. This would allow dietitians to spend the maximum portion of their time in activities for which they are educated.

Career mobility.--Hatch (9) reported there is general agreement that to meet the manpower needs, we must fully utilize the people already employed and find ways to employ well qualified persons who are effectively excluded from the health manpower labor market by formal academic requirements, e.g., "medics" from Vietnam returning to civilian life. We must also employ proficiency and equivalency testing to evaluate each individual's abilities, without regard for how he attained them. Proficiency testing assesses technical knowledge and skills, pertinent to the performance requirements of a specific job. Equivalency testing evaluates knowledge acquired through alternate learning experiences as a substitute for established academic requirements. Hatch believes there is no reason why such mechanisms cannot be used in systems of accreditation and certification for allied health personnel. Better utilization and retention of employed personnel depend

largely on improving career mobility, both vertically and horizontally. This can be accomplished only by removing as many of the artificial or unnecessary obstacles to advancement and change as possible, consistent with the maintenance of adequate professional standards of service.

Distribution of Manpower

Another concern cited by Hatch (9) is distribution of manpower. There are visible excesses of manpower in some occupational categories in certain geographic areas. In the same area, in some parts of the country, the need is sufficiently great that institutions feel they must establish new training programs to retrain available manpower.

An issue which bears heavily on the dietetic profession is the proliferation of new occupational categories and the continued trend toward specialization. It is hoped that new occupational categories can be kept to a minimum to meet legitimate requirements for effective health care delivery, to conserve scarce educational resources, and to maximize opportunities by not locking individuals into narrow specialties. Moreover, it is anticipated that as new levels of personnel, such as dietary technician, develop, some of the same mistakes regarding excessive professional domination and control will not be repeated.

One other suggestion offered by Kline and Dowling (14) is to utilize dietary support personnel, such as diet

clerks, dietary technicians and qualified food service supervisors, to assume selected responsibilities and relieve the dietitians of routine and repetitive tasks, so the dietitian can be more available for functioning as a part of the medical team.

Characteristics of Women in the Labor Force--Dietetic Profession

The literature suggests that women experience some common difficulties in planning and carrying out their work experiences around the goals of marriage and the family.

Historically, women in the labor force have exhibited work characteristics different from men. Since World War II, a period in which the proportionate number of women in the work force has been rapidly expanding, the literature on women workers--their characteristics and their motivations--has increased greatly (8). When sociologists have considered work participation and sex roles they have found differences in the extent of employment, career commitment, and in societal norms and values (8, 23). Although social changes are occurring in work patterns and attitudes, available data suggest that women have relatively low career commitments, discontinuous work careers, and are inclined to work primarily for monetary rather than professional reasons. While such characteristics may inadequately describe the dietetic professional,

it is likely that the goals of marriage and family do measurably influence career planning and work participation.

The field of dietetics and nutrition is associated with the achievement of significant societal goals surrounding health and well-being, and is likely to experience increased demands for manpower in the near future (17). In recognition of this, and its interest in adequately trained and utilized professionals, the American Dietetic Association designated areas of planning priorities. A study (21, 22) was conducted in the spring of 1970 by the Washington State Dietetic Association and the Health Manpower Project of the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services to provide data which bear on some of these priorities--in particular, the extent of labor participation and its implications for planning.

A discernable pattern of labor participation emerged from this study of Washington State's professional dietetic manpower. The findings reported indicate that the dietetic professional is very likely to participate in the labor force. If unemployed, the chances are high the professionally trained dietitian intends to return eventually to employment. Primary reasons for unemployment are connected with the temporal obligations revolving around children.

In assessing the pool of inactive manpower and its relationship to the current supply within the profession,

it is important to understand the expected duration and nature of the inactivity (22). Most of the inactive respondents intend to return to work. One third specified that their return would occur within five years. Other studies of dietetic manpower have found even greater percentages specifying a return to employment within five years.

Development for Women

According to Brenner (5) the 1960's saw the development of an increasing concern in this country that all members of the society have an opportunity to pursue their desired educational, social, and vocational goals without reference to their race, religion, sex, age, or other demographic characteristics. One recent aspect of this concern for equality of opportunity involves the occupational opportunity of women.

Brenner further states that increasing the occupational opportunity of women, like increasing opportunities for other groups, encounters many barriers: well-developed stereotypes, deeply-held role expectations, and thoroughly internalized behavior patterns. These factors, among others, have made women's participation in many occupations very difficult. One of the areas in which these factors have had their greatest influence is in management.

A Positive Approach to Women
In Management

In the opinion of Kay (12) through the years women have experienced difficulty in moving up the managerial hierarchy. Admittedly, part of the reason is their reluctance to prepare for executive level positions and to assume the responsibility that top jobs require. More insidious, however, is the resistance of many employers to make such positions available without regard to race, religion, sex, color, or national origin. While civil rights legislation and federal contract compliance guidelines have forced managements to examine their actions regarding the advancement of women, changes in their attitudes are more difficult to influence. Including a woman in their ranks, regardless of her qualifications, is still looked upon as fulfilling an obligation rather than a positive action that will contribute to the organization's success in more than an "image-making" way. Certainly women must welcome any opportunity for promotion, regardless of the reason. It would be nice, however, to have a more realistic response to the recognition of ability as the criterion for advancement.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

A random sample of 200 professionally qualified dietitians who were 1973 members of the Michigan Dietetic Association was selected for study. Upon request, the Michigan Dietetic Association provided the investigator with their 890-member alphabetized mailing list as a valid source from which to choose the sample population.

Sampling Procedure

Based on a zip code analysis of the Michigan Dietetic Association 1973 membership list, only 8 of the Michigan members were located in the Upper Peninsula. Due to the sparse population of dietitians in this geographic area, members residing in the Upper Peninsula were precluded from the mailing list which limited the number from which the study sample was drawn to the 882 members residing in the Lower Peninsula.

In order to obtain a representative sample of dietitians the reduced membership list was then sub-divided into eight proximal zip code areas. To further insure a homogeneous representation throughout the Lower Peninsula,

a frequency count and percentage of the Michigan Dietetic Association membership list were computed for each zip code area classification. This provided a basis for the ratio method of random selection for the 200 persons that were invited to participate in the study. The geographical distributions of the 1973 members of the Michigan Dietetic Association living in the Lower Peninsula, tabulated according to zip code area, frequency count and percent of total, for the parent population and for the selected sample are shown in Table 1.

The Survey Instrument

The data gathering device chosen for this survey was the mail back questionnaire which included both open end and closed response questions. The majority of questions were structured to facilitate uniform coding of the responses, electronic data processing and analysis. The seven page questionnaire was divided into four parts.

I. Personal-Professional Characteristics

This part of the questionnaire was designed to elicit descriptive responses concerning personal, professional and employment factors that would help characterize the respondents and facilitate subgroup classifications to permit meaningful inter- and intra-subgroup data comparisons.

TABLE 1.--Geographic Distribution of 1973 Michigan Dietetic Association Members (Lower Peninsula) for the Parent Population and for the Sample Selected for Survey.

Michigan Zip Code Areas	Michigan Dietetic Association Members			
	Parent Population		Sample Selected	
	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Area (1)</u>				
48000 Detroit				
48100 Detroit				
48200 Detroit	419	47.5	95	47.5
<u>Area (2)</u>				
48400 Flint				
48500 Flint	62	7.0	14	7.0
<u>Area (3)</u>				
48600 W. Saginaw				
48700 E. Saginaw	40	4.5	9	4.5
<u>Area (4)</u>				
48800 E. Lansing				
48900 Lansing	97	11.0	22	11.0
<u>Area (5)</u>				
49000 Kalamazoo	53	6.0	12	6.0
<u>Area (6)</u>				
49100 Jackson				
49200 S. Bend, Ind. (Mich. Post Office)	22	2.5	55	2.5
<u>Area (7)</u>				
49300 Gr. Rapids				
49400 Gr. Rapids				
49500 Gr. Rapids	154	17.5	35	17.5
<u>Area (8)</u>				
49600 Cadillac	35	4.0	8	4.0
TOTALS	882	100%	200	100%

II. Locating Professional Employment

The questions in this part were designed to (a) gather the opinions of respondents regarding opportunities for learning about professional vacancies in the field of dietetics and (b) identify the methods they used and to what extent they had used each when trying to locate professional employment.

III. Job Characteristics: Current and Previous

This part of the questionnaire pertained to selected characteristics of the respondent's current and previous jobs which may have affected career advancement.

IV. Professional Employment in the Field of Dietetics

Questions in this section related only to professional jobs which the respondents have held within the field of dietetics. The items of inquiry were designed to obtain descriptive data concerning the types of current and previous positions held, the conditions of employment of each, and their experiences concerning opportunities for professional advancement.

The survey instrument and the accompanying cover letter were pre-tested by eight professionally trained dietitians and evaluated by the investigator's five member

guidance committee. The materials were examined for appropriateness of content, clarity of statements and general structure. Changes were made to incorporate the suggestions of all reviewers. Copies of the revised cover letter and questionnaire which were sent to the selected sample members are included in the Appendix, pages 93 through 101.

The returned questionnaires were inspected by the investigator to determine their usefulness for this study. Only those questionnaires returned unanswered were discarded.

A coding frame was developed to facilitate uniform handling of responses to both closed and open questions. The coding systems for responses to all closed questions were established at the time of questionnaire development and printed on the survey instrument. Responses to open-end questions were either classified into code response schemes or hand tabulated by the investigator according to the response received. All codified response data were manually recorded on standard 80-column data coding forms and then key-punched on cards for computer processing.

After carefully considering various statistical designs, the investigator developed a descriptive list of calculations needed to analyze the response data for each question. Types of calculations needed for meaningful comparisons included frequency counts, percentages of total

group response, number of unused observations, cumulative frequencies and cumulative percentages of total group response.

The services of a statistical consultant were obtained for assistance in (a) the identification and application of appropriate computer programs for routine analyses, (b) the design of special programs to obtain selected itemized percentage comparisons, (c) preparing and verifying the response data for processing, and (d) accurate interpretation of the answers obtained on the computer print-out sheets. All data were processed on the Control Data Corporation High Speed Computer, Model 6500, located in the Michigan State University Computer Center.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY DATA

Composition of the Sample

On January 12, 1974, questionnaires with introductory cover letters were mailed to 200 randomly selected Michigan members of the American Dietetic Association from eight Michigan zip code area classifications. The major geographic area included in each zip code classification and the system used to select the sample members are detailed in Table 1, Chapter III, p. 23.

Sample members were given four weeks to return the completed questionnaires. Eighty (40.4%) were returned in less than two weeks and by the deadline 43 (21.5%) additional questionnaires had been returned, yielding an initial return of 123 (61.5%).

On February 18, duplicate questionnaires with reminder cover letters were mailed to the 77 non-respondents with an extended deadline of three weeks for return. There were 43 responses to the follow-up mailing, thus, yielding a total of 166 (83.0%) returns.

Although 166 questionnaires were returned, 6 (3.6%) were unanswered with notes attached to explain their

reasons for not participating in this study. Five members felt they had nothing to contribute because they were retired and one questionnaire was returned blank by a professional colleague for a deceased addressee. The remaining 160 returned questionnaires were checked for completeness and all were considered usable. All analyses of the data are, therefore, based on the 160 professionals who were willing to participate.

Personal-Professional Characteristics

Personal Information

In order to develop a general profile of dietetic professionals in Michigan, respondents were asked to identify five personal characteristics: sex, age, marital status, number and ages of children, and minority group membership.

Sex.--Analysis of the data related to sex indicated that of the 160 study participants 9 declined to respond to this question. Of the 151 who did respond, 148 (98.0%) were female and 3 (2.0%) were male. These findings are in general accord with those reported in 1972 by the American Dietetic Association for Michigan members which revealed that 99 percent of their survey respondents were female (2).

Age.--Nine of the 160 respondents declined to answer this question. Of 151 answering, less than 2.0

percent (1.4%) of the respondents were under 25 years of age and only 12.8 percent over 54 years of age. The number of respondents in each of three middle age ranges were nearly evenly distributed, 28.4 percent in the age range of 25 to 34, 31.8 percent in the age range of 35 to 44, and 25.7 percent in the age range of 45 to 54.

Findings further indicate that 29.8 percent of the respondents were under 35 years of age which can be interpreted as one possible indication for an increased future supply of dietitians in Michigan, especially when paralleled with future predictions for additional dietitians needed as reported by the Study Commission on Dietetics (25). These data are also encouraging because in a 1969 New Jersey study (21) of the dietitians and nutritionists it was reported that only 15 percent of the respondents were under age 30 and these researchers noted that these findings could pose a problem for the future supply of professionals in these areas.

Marital status.--Eight of the 160 respondents declined to answer this question but of the 152 who did respond, approximately 71.0 percent were married, 22.0 percent single, 4.5 percent separated or divorced, and 2.5 percent widowed.

Number and age ranges of children.--Twenty-six (16.3%) of the 160 persons responding to the survey did not

complete this question. Of the 134 who did, 100 (74.6%) indicated they had one or more children in at least one of six age ranges coordinated with the generally accepted age levels for education. The remaining 34 respondents were childless. Data pertaining to the number of children for each of the six designated age ranges for the 100 respondents are detailed in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, the 100 respondents with children had a total of 267 distributed among all school-level age ranges. When school levels are combined, 106 (39.7%) children were 10 years of age or younger (pre-school and elementary), 72 (26.9%) were 11 to 17 years of age (junior and senior high), and 89 (33.3%) were 18 years of age or older. Among the 100 respondents, more of them had one or more children of pre-school or elementary school age (36 each classification) than was true for any other single category.

Minority group membership.--According to Strauss and Sayles (24), minority employment is perhaps the most urgent and perplexing personnel problem faced by management in the second half of the twentieth century. Dietitians as well as other professional groups faced with this challenge have made modest progress but have not eliminated the impact of past discrimination.

TABLE 2.--Respondents' Children: Number of Children for Each Respondent Summarized According to School-Level Age Range. (N=100 respondents).

School Level-- Age Ranges	Respondents With Children (No.)	Number of Children for Each Respondent					Total Children	
		1	2	3	4	5	No.	%
1. Pre-school (Under 5 years)	36	29	6	1	0	0	44	16.5
2. Elementary School (5-10 years)	36	16	14	6	0	0	62	23.2
3. Junior High School (11-13 years)	23	17	5	1	0	0	30	11.2
4. Senior High School (14-17 years)	27	12	15	0	0	0	42	15.7
5. College-- Under Graduate (18-21 years)	23	18	4	0	1	0	30	11.2
6. Post-College (Over 21 years)	31	11	15	3	1	1	59	22.1
GRAND TOTAL							267	99.9

This study did not intend to explore the cause and effect of minority employment problems, however, it should not be construed that such problems do not exist within this professional group. For this reason the investigator felt it might be useful to isolate and compare career profiles among the ethnic representations of this study with the intent of attaining a more precise assessment of career advancement. All respondents were asked to check yes if they were members of a minority group and no if they were not. Those responding yes were asked to identify their minority group. Of the 145 (90.6%) responding, 127 (87.6%) checked no and 18 (12.4%) checked yes. Of the 18 who are minority group members, 14 (77.8%) are Black/Afro American, 2 (11.1%) are Oriental, 1 (5.6%) is Spanish American and 1 (5.6%) is American Indian. Fifteen (9.4%) chose not to answer this question.

Professional Information

The professional data which collectively characterize the respondents' membership in the American Dietetic Association included the year the respondent joined the Association, current membership classification, and how he/she fulfilled the membership eligibility requirements. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate their current employment status. In order to facilitate sub-group classifications that would permit meaningful inter- and intra-sub-group data comparisons, respondents were asked to

indicate their extent of employment, if currently employed inside or outside the Dietetic Profession, and reasons for current employment status if unemployed.

Year joined the Association.--All 160 respondents were members of the American Dietetic Association, however, nine (5.6%) did not answer this question. As shown in Figure 1, all of the 151 respondents joined the Association between 1934 and 1973. Based on two twenty-year periods, 34 percent joined between 1934 and 1953, and 66 percent became members during the period of 1954 through 1973. Within the limits of this study, it appears that the number of Michigan dietitians joining the American Dietetic Association between 1954-1973 has increased appreciably. However, when this twenty-year period is divided into two decades, findings indicate a gradual decrease in the number of dietitians joining the Association from decade 3 (1954-1963) to decade 4 (1964-1973).

In order to determine if the Michigan pattern of membership, as demonstrated by a significant portion of Michigan dietetic professionals, is reflective of a gradual decline in the number of persons joining the Association, the four decades were compared with the four age ranges previously indicated by the 151 professionals surveyed. Upon comparison, the percentage of respondents for each of the four decades appears to be distributed in a manner

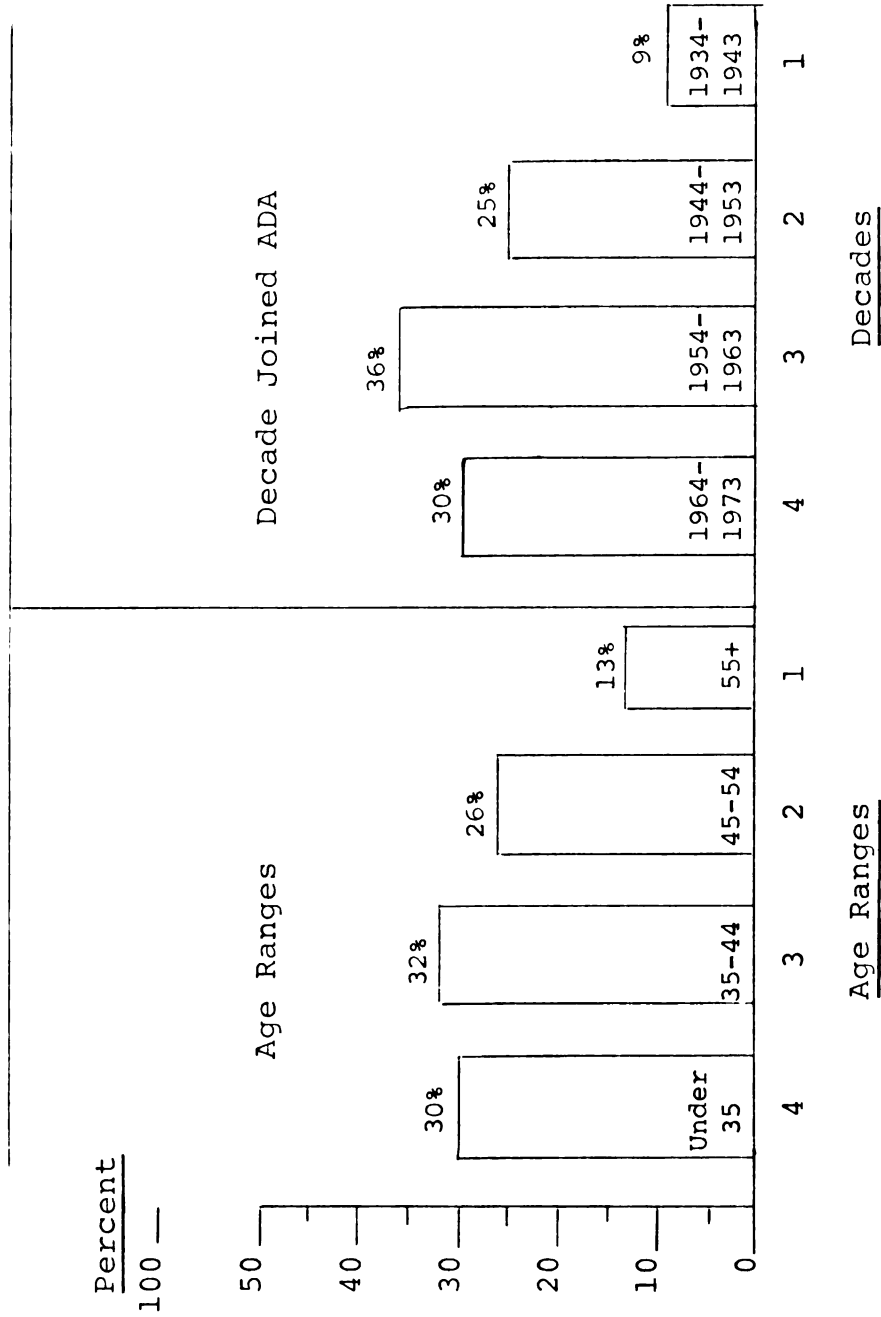


Figure 1.--Percentage Comparison of Ages of Survey Respondents and Decades of Initial American Dietetic Association Membership Application (N = 151 respondents).

similar to the distribution of group percentage representation in each of the four age ranges.

Membership classification.--The American Dietetic Association inaugurated registration of its members on a voluntary basis in 1969. The registry was initiated to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public by encouraging high standards of performance of persons practicing in the profession (10).

Eight (5.0%) of the 160 respondents declined to indicate their membership classification. Of the 152 respondents, 140 (92%) were active registered members and 12 (8%) were not. Of the twelve that were not registered, 5 were active members, 4 were life members and 3 were retired members. Findings from this study closely parallel the figures reported for Michigan members in the 1972 national study (2) of the American Dietetic Association (see Table 3).

Eligibility requirements met.--Eight respondents declined to answer this question. Of the 152 who did respond, 88.8 percent qualified for membership in the American Dietetic Association by completing an internship after earning a bachelor degree, 6.6 percent qualified for membership through the pre-planned supervised experience plan after receiving a bachelor degree, 3.3 percent qualified for membership with a masters degree plus approved

TABLE 3.--Comparison Between the 1972 National Figures for Michigan and the One Hundred Fifty-Two Survey Participants for this Study.

Michigan Membership Classifications	From This Study		ADA Study - 1972	
	No.	%	No.	%
Active-Registered	140	92.0	808	90.0
Active--Not Registered	5	3.0	45	5.0
Life	4	3.0	34	4.0
Retired	3	2.0	8	.89
Honorary	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>.11</u>
TOTALS	152	100.0	896	100.00

experience, and 0.7 percent qualified for membership with an earned doctoral degree. Only 0.7 percent met the qualifications for membership by completing a coordinated undergraduate program in dietetics.

Current employment status.--This question was designed to ascertain the respondents' extent of employment, reasons for employment outside the dietetic profession, and reasons for current unemployment.

Among the 160 respondents, 75.1 percent were currently employed in the field of dietetics, 56.3 percent full-time and 18.8 percent part-time. Of those remaining,

2.5 percent were employed outside the field of dietetics and 22.5 percent were unemployed.

Four (2.5%) of the respondents reported that they were employed full-time outside the profession of dietetics and, collectively, indicated six reasons for this. Three reasons mentioned, each by two of the four respondents, were higher salaries available outside the dietetic profession, more advantageous fringe benefits and a scarcity of jobs for dietitians in their locality. The three other reasons cited, each by at least one of these four respondents, were present job is more challenging, better opportunity for personal advancement, and fewer evening, weekend, and holiday work hours required.

Thirty-six (22.5%) of the respondents who indicated they were unemployed at the time of this survey identified seven different reasons for this. Twenty-two (61.1%) were full-time homemakers not seeking employment, eight (22.2%) were attending graduate school full-time, five (13.9%) were retired and not interested in further employment and four (11.1%) were physically unable to work. The three remaining reasons reported, temporarily out of work-actively seeking employment, the scarcity of full-time job opportunities for dietitians and the scarcity of part-time job opportunities for dietitians, were each mentioned by one respondent of the unemployed group.

With regard to the major reason for unemployment of professionally qualified dietitians, the data obtained in this survey appear to support the findings of Sanford, McKinley, and Scruggs (20) in which 80 (74%) of 108 unemployed dietitians stated that personal reasons such as family responsibilities or pregnancy would not permit them to work. Findings of other research workers (22, 13, 26) also indicate that the presence and responsibility of young children is one major reason for unemployment among professional dietitians.

Relationship Between Employment Status
and Parental Responsibility According
to Ethnic Group Membership

Response data pertaining to employment status and parental responsibility are summarized by ethnic group membership and presented in Table 4. Examination of the relationships between employment status and parental responsibilities within and between minority group members and non-minority group members revealed the following comparisons:

- A. Ethnic group membership as disclosed by 145 (90.7%) of the 160 study participants revealed that 18 (11.3%) of the respondents were members of one of four minority groups and 127 (79.4%) were not minority group members. (Fifteen study participants chose not to respond to this particular question.)

TABLE 4.--Relationships Between Employment Status and Parental Responsibility According to Ethnic Group Reported.

Ethnic Group Membership	Total Respondents		Employed ^a				Unemployed ^a			
			With Children		Without Children		With Children		Without Children	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Minority</u>										
Afro American	14	8.8	11	61.1	2	11.1	13	72.2	--	1 5.6
American Indian	1	0.6	1	5.6	--	--	1	5.6	--	--
Oriental	2	1.3	1	5.6	1	5.6	2	11.2	--	--
Spanish American	<u>1</u>	<u>0.6</u>	--	--	<u>1</u>	<u>5.6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5.6</u>	--	--
Minority (Total)	18	11.3	13	72.2	4	22.3	17	94.5	--	1 5.6
<u>Non-Minority (Total)</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>79.4</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>37.8</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>35.4</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>73.2</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>21.3</u>
Total Identified	145	90.7	61	42.1	49	33.8	110	75.9	27	18.6
Not Identified	<u>15</u>	<u>9.4</u>							8	5.5
TOTAL	160	100.1							35	24.1

^aPercentages based on group membership totals: Minority: N=18; Non-minority: N=127; Total Identified: N=145

- B. With respect to employment status, 17 (94.5%) of the 18 minority group members were employed and only 1 (5.6%) was not. In contrast only 93 (73.2%) of the 127 non-minority respondents were employed whereas 34 (26.8%) were not.
- C. With respect to parental responsibility, 13 (72.2%) of the minority respondents had children and 5 (27.9%) did not. Of the non-minority group members 75 (59.1%) had children and 52 (40.9%) did not.
- D. Comparisons of employment status and parental responsibility revealed that of the minority group respondents 13 (72.2%) of those employed had children and 4 (22.3%) did not. The one remaining respondent of the minority group was both unemployed and childless. On the other hand, of the non-minority respondents 48 (37.8%) of those employed had children and 45 (35.4%) did not; of those who were unemployed, 27 (21.3%) had children and 7 (5.5%) did not.

Although it is acknowledged that the source of these data is limited (145 [16.4%] of the 882 members of the American Dietetic Association residing in Michigan in 1973) these findings do provide some evidence that, among Michigan ADA qualified dietitians, minority professionals with family responsibilities are more likely to be active

practitioners than their non-minority counterparts. Furthermore, this higher percentage of non-minority dietary professionals (as opposed to minority dietary professionals) who were unemployed at the time of this survey may be indicative of a variety of personal priorities and/or situational factors which collectively influenced the employment status of these professionals.

Locating Professional Employment

The questions in this part of the study were designed to gather opinions of the respondents regarding opportunities for learning about professional vacancies in the field of dietetics. In addition, respondents were asked to (a) identify the methods they had used, (b) indicate their effectiveness, and (c) for any method(s) they had not used, indicate the reason(s) why.

Learning About Professional Job Opportunities

Respondents were asked to check one of four statements which in their opinion best described their opportunities for learning about job vacancies in the field of dietetics. Nine survey participants declined to indicate their opinions regarding this question. Of the 151 who did respond, two (1.3%) indicated excellent and eighty-five (56.3%) indicated good. Although not a majority, sixty-four (42.4%) of those surveyed felt their opportunities in this

regard were poor to very poor (poor = 46 [30.5%], very poor = 18 [11.9%]). From these findings it appears that more effective means of informing professional dietitians of job vacancies should be developed in an effort to attract more persons to the field and to encourage those already in the field to remain.

Locating Professional Employment Opportunities

From a list of nine methods commonly available to dietitians when searching for professional employment, respondents were asked to indicate which of these methods they had used and the number of job offers they had received by each method. A list of six reasons sometimes given by professionals for not using certain methods to locate job opportunities was also developed to ascertain why respondents in this study had not used certain methods when trying to locate employment. For each method not used, respondents were asked to indicate why by either identifying the reason(s) from the list provided or by writing in additional reasons. The response data are summarized by method in Table 5.

A prerequisite for analysis of these data is an understanding of the limitations inherent in them. This survey did not request the number of times a single method has been used, the frequency of job search, nor the combinations in which job seekers used the methods. Absence of

TABLE 5.--Locating Professional Employment Opportunities: Methods Used, Number of Job Offers Received and Reasons for Not Using Methods Reported by Survey Respondents (N = 160).

Methods for Locating Professional Employment	Method Usage		Number of Job Offers Received												Too Ex- pensive				Good Jobs Fairly Found This way				Afraid Employer Would Find Out				Did Not Know About This Method				Not Necessary For Me	
	Response	No.	None		1 to 3		4 to 6		7 to 9		10 or more		No.	A	No.	A	No.	A	No.	A	No.	A	No.	A	No.	A	No.	A				
			No.	A	No.	A	No.	A	No.	A	No.	A																	No.	A	No.	A
1. Contacted former or current professor	Yes No	28 132	17.5 82.5	5	17.9	20	71.4	1	3.6	1	3.6	1	3.6	1	0.8	0	---	4	3.0	0	---	3	2.3	124	93.4							
2. Consulted college placement office	Yes No	15 145	9.4 90.6	4	26.7	9	60.0	1	6.7	1	6.7	0	---	0	---	0	---	8	5.5	0	---	2	1.4	135	93.1							
3. Advertised availability in professional journals	Yes No	4 156	2.5 97.5	1	25.0	3	75.0	0	---	0	---	0	---	3	1.9	2	1.3	5	3.2	1	0.6	0	---	145	93.0							
4. Telephone/went letters of inquiry to potential employers	Yes No	92 68	57.5 42.5	8	8.7	66	71.7	14	15.2	1	1.1	3	3.3	0	---	1	2.9	1	1.5	1	1.5	0	---	64	94.3							
5. Inquired among former classmates and/or professional colleagues	Yes No	72 88	45.0 55.0	16	22.2	48	66.7	5	6.9	1	1.4	2	2.8	0	---	0	---	4	4.6	0	---	1	1.1	83	94.3							
6. Answered job ads in professional journals	Yes No	18 142	11.3 88.7	0	---	15	83.3	1	5.6	0	---	2	11.1	0	---	0	---	5	3.5	1	0.7	0	---	136	95.8							
7. Answered jobs listed in newspapers	Yes No	44 116	27.5 72.5	7	15.9	36	81.8	1	2.3	0	---	0	---	0	---	0	---	5	4.3	0	---	0	---	111	95.7							
8. Consulted a private employment agency	Yes No	29 131	18.1 81.9	2	6.9	23	77.3	4	13.8	0	---	0	---	7	5.3	1	0.8	3	2.3	1	0.8	0	---	119	90.8							
9. Consulted a public employment agency	Yes No	12 148	7.5 92.5	4	33.3	7	58.3	1	8.3	0	---	0	---	1	0.7	8	5.4	4	2.7	0	---	3	2.0	132	89.2							

such information inhibits calculation of a true measure of job search intensity. The data from this investigation show only the extent to which the respondents used the job-seeking methods usually available.

A. Methods used.--Tabulation of the response data indicated that each of the methods listed had been used by some members of the survey group. As shown in Table 5, the most frequently indicated method (57.5% of the respondents) was to telephone or send letters of inquiry to potential employers. The second most frequently used method (reported by 45.0% of the respondents) was to inquire among former classmates and/or professional colleagues. Percentages of respondents indicating their usage of the seven remaining methods ranged from 27.5 percent to 2.5 percent. Of these, college placement services, public employment agencies, and advertising in professional journals had been used by less than 10 percent of the persons reporting. These findings are in accord with those reported by the Monthly Labor Review (4) where the most frequently used jobseeking method was applying directly to potential employers.

Twelve (7.5%) of the 160 respondents wrote in three other methods they had used to locate professional employment. Seven participants had used the American Dietetic Association Placement Service, four had contacted their respective internship directors and responded to job availability

announcements received by these directors, and one had contacted a friend of the family. In every case, one or more job offers had been received by using these methods.

B. Job offers received.--The comparative effectiveness of the methods used by the survey participants for locating professional employment is readily apparent from the data presented in Table 5. For all methods listed, a high percentage of the survey respondents who used each method experienced positive results with the range of 1 to 3 job offers predominating.

C. Reasons methods not used.--The reason most frequently indicated by respondents for not using a particular method for locating professional employment opportunities was that it had not been personally necessary. Among methods, this response ranged from 89.2 to 95.8 percent (see Table 5). The frequency of mention for each of the other five reasons cited by respondents varied considerably among methods. In every instance, however, the frequency of mention of a single reason did not exceed 5.5 percent of those reporting they did not use the method.

Judging from the data submitted by the respondents in this study it appears that because of the continuing shortage of qualified dietitians in Michigan and the increased public need for dietetic services, locating employment opportunities has not been a difficult problem

for the majority of professionals who participated in this survey. In recent years the burden of "search" for qualified persons to provide dietary services appears to affect employers more than individuals desiring employment.

Characteristics of Current and Previous Jobs

This part of the questionnaire pertained to those characteristics of one's current and previous jobs which may affect career advancement. At the time the survey was taken 36 (22.5%) of the 160 respondents were not currently employed. Therefore, the number of respondents on which the current job data analyses are based is 124. The data relative to previous jobs are based on 147 respondents because 13 (8.1%) of the 160 survey participants were still in their first jobs.

Current Job

Length of employment.--With respect to length of employment in the current job, 36.3 percent of the respondents had been in their current positions for less than 3 years, and 37.9 percent had had their jobs for 3 to 10 years. The remaining respondents (25.9%) reported lengths of employment ranging from 10 years to over 25 years (17.9% for 10 to 20 years and 8.0% for 20 years or more).

This large proportion of respondents (74.2%) employed in their current position for less than ten years

is not uncommon in the field of dietetics because women comprise the major portion of professionals in Dietetic Departments. Findings of one researcher in the field of dietetics (22) have indicated that marriage and family responsibilities were major reasons reported by graduates for either not entering or for leaving the field.

Current job ratings.--When asked to rate their current job, attitudes expressed by 82.3 percent of the respondents indicated a rating of excellent to good (23.4% excellent, 58.9% good). Ratings of fair were indicated by 12.9 percent of the survey participants and only 4.8 percent rated their current job as poor (4.0%) or very poor (0.8%). Within the limits of these data it appears that, in general, Michigan dietitians are satisfied with their current positions as professionals.

Plans to remain at current job.--Responses to this question revealed that over half (53.2%) of the survey members were planning to stay on their present jobs indefinitely and another 14.5 percent planned to remain until retirement. On the basis of these responses it seems likely that two-thirds of those surveyed viewed their current employment as personally stable. On the other hand, one-third of the respondents (32.3%) indicated they were contemplating a personal change within 5 years or less. Of these, 13.7 percent planned to change within 5 years, 5.7

percent within 2 to 3 years, 10.5 percent within 1 to 2 years and 2.4 percent within a few months.

Although it is generally postulated that an important underlying cause of high turnover rates in employment is a person's failure to achieve the desired job satisfaction, the data from the dietetic professionals participating in this study indicate that this premise may be correct for only one-third of these respondents.

Whereabouts of respondents' predecessors.--In order to assess intrinsic mobility of dietary professionals within the employment unit, survey participants were asked to select which of eight possible answers best explained the whereabouts of the person whom they had replaced. In responding 31.5 percent indicated working at another institution, agency or business firm, 24.2 percent had no predecessor, 12.9 percent did not know, 12.1 percent checked retired, 5.7 percent checked deceased, 4.0 percent checked working at the same institution but in an advanced position, 4.0 percent checked has left the profession, 0.8 percent checked attending graduate school full-time, and 4.8 percent wrote in responses that had not been provided for in the list given. Write-in responses relative to the predecessors of these six respondents included: has left town, is working at the same institution in a lower position, is working as my assistant at the same institution but is not a member of

the American Dietetic Association, and married--not working but still very active in the Association.

Importance of factors in current job acceptance.--

Respondents were asked to indicate the relative importance of eleven factors in their decision to accept their current job. Percentages of group response for four degrees of importance for each of the eleven selected factors are detailed in Table 6. Percentages of group response for very important and quite important have been added together to ascertain the relative importance among factors. The rank order of importance (most to least) for these eleven factors is presented in Table 7.

At least 40.0 percent of the respondents felt that environmental factors and advancement opportunities were significant in deciding to accept their current job. The setting in which the job places the dietitian--locality/climate, although noticeably of lesser importance than both professional and compensation factors for the study respondents, is the third strongest influence upon job acceptance. It is also realized that for women in the field of dietetics, environmental factors which may influence the dietitian's job choice are often predetermined by the employment opportunities of the spouse.

Findings from a 1967 study (6) of employment mobility among college professors indicated that

TABLE 6.--Comparative Influence of Eleven Factors in Current Job Acceptance Decisions of Michigan Dietary Professionals.

	Very Important (%)*	Quite Important (%)	Not Very Important (%)	Of No Importance (%)	Did Not Respond (%)
1. Salary	20.2	46.8	23.4	0.8	8.9
2. Future salary prospects	15.3	46.0	21.0	4.0	13.7
3. Fringe benefits	19.4	37.1	20.2	11.3	12.1
4. Advancement opportunities	20.2	21.0	25.0	18.6	15.3
5. Locality/Climate	29.8	13.7	19.4	20.2	16.9
6. Working hours	37.1	27.4	20.2	8.9	6.5
7. Reputation of employer	37.9	32.3	12.1	4.8	12.9
8. Research opportunities	8.1	12.9	25.0	36.3	17.7
9. Challenging assignment	48.4	32.3	6.5	4.8	8.1
10. Additional income	19.4	25.8	20.2	17.7	16.9
11. Bored with staying at home	9.7	12.1	8.9	44.4	25.0

* Percent of respondents (N=124)

TABLE 7 .--Rank Order of Importance for Eleven Factors
Which Influenced Job Choice for Michigan
Dietitians (most to least).

Rank Order	Percent of Group Responding*
1. Challenging assignment	80.7
2. Reputation of employer	70.2
3. Salary	67.0
4. Working hours	64.5
5. Future salary prospects	61.3
6. Fringe benefits	56.5
7. Additional income	45.2
8. Locality/Climate	43.5
9. Advancement opportunities	41.2
10. Bored with staying home	21.8
11. Research opportunities	21.0

* Percent indicating very important or quite important (N=124).

environmental factors in general were not important in job choice decisions among academicians. In ranking order of importance such factors as cultural opportunities, congeniality of colleagues, nearness to graduate school, proximity of friends and relatives and climate crowd the bottom of the list. More than any other of the seventeen factors listed, professors were willing to sacrifice their

preferred environment in order to attain other advantages of a given job.

The smaller degree of influence of advancement opportunities on dietitians' for accepting employment can perhaps be explained in part by findings reported earlier in this study. Respondents were asked to indicate how long they planned to remain on their current jobs and one-third (32.3%) of the 124 currently employed professionals indicated they were contemplating a personal change within 5 years or less. It is apparent that women do not have as strong an attachment to the labor force as men and may often be contemplating change in professional jobs due to the career mobility of the spouse. Two factors affecting far fewer respondents (less than 22.0%) when making the decisions to accept their current job were bored with staying home, and research opportunities.

Previous Job

Two questions pertaining to employment immediately prior to the job currently held (or last job if currently unemployed) sought information about (a) the number of years study participants had been on their last jobs, and (b) their reasons for leaving those jobs. Thirteen (8.1%) of the 160 persons surveyed were unable to complete these questions because they were still in their first jobs. The response data reported here, therefore, are necessarily

limited to the 147 persons who were able to furnish the requested information.

Length of employment.--Of the 147 persons reporting, 112 (76.2%) had left their previous jobs before they had completed 5 years of service: 25 (17.0%) within 1 year or less, 64 (43.5%) within 1 to 3 years and 23 (15.7%) within 3 to 5 years. Of the 35 (23.9%) remaining, 17 (11.6%) had departed after 5 to 10 years of service, 11 (7.5%) after 10 to 15 years and 7 (4.8%) after 15 or more years. Within the limits of these data, less than one-fourth (23.9%) of the Michigan dietitians surveyed had accumulated a service record of more than 5 years with their previous employer.

Reasons for leaving previous job.--Respondents were presented with a list of 13 reasons commonly expressed by dietary professionals to explain why they have changed jobs. Each person was asked to check as many reasons as applied to their situation and encouraged to write-in additional reasons if desired.

The number of responses given by the 147 participants totaled 235 with no additional reasons cited. A summary of the responses received, ranked according to frequency of mention, is presented in Table 8.

From these data it is apparent that the 5 most frequently indicated reasons for changing jobs all relate

TABLE 8.--Reasons for Leaving Previous Job (N=147).

Rank Order	Reasons for Leaving	Percent Group Response	
		No.	%
1.	Family obligations	46	31.3
2.	More challenging job opportunity came along	36	24.5
3.	Moved to a different city	35	23.8
4.	Personal--other reasons	31	21.1
5.	Professional advancement outlook poor	29	19.7
6.	Dissatisfied with salary	13	8.8
7.	Position terminated--became unemployed	12	8.2
8.	Personal-physical reasons	10	6.8
9.	Returned to college for advanced study	7	4.8
10.	Dissatisfied with employment benefits	6	4.1
11.	Early retirement	6	4.1
12.	Change in dietary management--from institution operated to contract food management company	3	2.0
13.	Mandatory retirement	1	0.7

to the accommodation and/or fulfillment of family obligations and a desire for professional advancement. Since a high percentage of the study participants are married women with children, this finding is not surprising considering:

- (a) their dual roles as homemakers and professionals, and
- (b) the immediate and long-range benefits derived from additional family income.

Although cited with less frequency, the remaining 8 reasons suggest the variety and, perhaps, the probability of multiple factors which have influenced these Michigan dietitians to change employers.

Professional Employment in the Field of Dietetics

In an effort to assemble a general profile of dietary positions held by Michigan professionals, survey participants were asked to report on eight characteristics descriptive of their current and/or previous positions in the field of dietetics. The information requested included the following:

1. Type and location of employing institution agency or business firm.
2. Categories of professional job titles.
3. Number of hours dietetic professionals work per week.
4. Weekend and holiday work requirements.
5. Percentage of time devoted to eight professional activities.
6. Years of dietetic work experience prior to job acceptance.
7. Salary commensurate with demonstrated abilities for assigned duties.

8. Career advancement--promotion received versus salary increase, former job title, and denial of consideration for better or different job.

Type and Location of Employing
Institution, Agency or
Business Firm

As shown in Table 9, the respondents reported a variety of settings in which they were or had been previously employed. For both current and previous jobs, the majority are (were) employees of hospitals (65.8% currently, 74.6% previously). Other employment settings reported for current and previous jobs are (were) non-hospital health

TABLE 9.--Type of Employing Institution, Agency of Business Firm.

Type of Employer	Current Job		Previous Job	
	No.	%	No.	%
Hospital	79	65.8	97	74.6
Non-Hospital Health Care Facility	21	17.5	9	6.9
Public School	7	5.8	2	1.5
College University	5	4.2	12	9.2
State Agency	3	2.5	--	---
Commercial Business	5	4.2	7	5.4
Sub-total	120	100.0	127	97.6
No Response	0	--	3	2.3
TOTAL	120	100.0	130	99.9

care facility, public school, college/university, and commercial business. A very small percentage (2.5) of respondents are currently employed in a state agency whereas none had had a previous job in a state agency.

Geographic mobility.--Eighty-one (67.5%) of the 120 dietetic professionals currently employed in Michigan were previously employed in the state of Michigan, 24 (20.0%) had previously been employed in sixteen other states, and 2 (1.6%) had come to Michigan from other countries. Thirteen (10.8%) did not indicate the geographic location of their previous job.

Categories of Professional Job Titles

Dietitians are (were) engaged in a wide variety of professional assignments as indicated by the job titles reported. The majority (70.7% for current job and 67.8% for previous job) reported job assignments which involved responsibilities for direct patient services. The second category of professional assignments most frequently indicated was responsibility for the management of food service operations (25.0% for current job and 25.4% for previous job). Considerably fewer respondents (4.2% for current job and 6.7% for previous job) reported titles indicating college/university teaching, consumer services or research assignments. The thirteen specific professional titles

reported by the respondents (120 for current job and 130 for previous job) are detailed in Table 10.

Number of Hours Worked per Week

The number of hours worked per week, as reported by dietetic professionals, were identical in rank order of frequency for current and for previous jobs. As shown in Table 11, over half of the survey respondents are (were) engaged in professional dietetic activity 31-40 hours per week (55.8 percent for current job and 70.0 percent for previous job), a decrease of 14.2 percent from previous to current jobs. When compared with respondents' previous jobs there is a 6.9 percent increase of dietitians who currently work less than 21 hours per week, an increase of 4.0 percent who work over 40 hours per week, and a 2.9 percent increase of dietitians who work 21-30 hours per week.

These reported differences imply that some dietitians are working fewer hours per week on their current job, than on their previous job. Earlier findings in this study concerning job titles also revealed that there were significantly more consultant dietitians practicing on current jobs than were practicing on previous jobs. According to one study the consultant dietitian (19) is an advisor and may opt to work anywhere from less than half-time to more than full-time, depending on his/her personal desires and the needs of the institution as agreed upon with the administrator.

TABLE 10.--Categories of Professional Job Titles: Current and Previous Jobs.

Professional Assignment	Current Job		Previous Job	
	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Patient Service Dietitians:</u>				
Chief Therapeutic	4	3.3	5	3.8
Head Therapeutic	13	10.8	7	5.4
Generalist (Therapeutic and Administrative)	6	5.0	8	6.2
Teaching (In-Service, School of Nursing)	3	2.5	8	6.2
Public Health/Community Service	7	5.8	7	5.4
Consultant	<u>27</u>	<u>22.5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6.9</u>
Sub-Total	85	70.7	88	67.8
<u>Food Service Management Dietitians:</u>				
Chief Dietitian/Director	15	12.5	12	9.2
Assistant Director	5	4.2	4	3.1
Food Production/Administrator	<u>10</u>	<u>8.3</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>13.1</u>
Sub-Total	30	25.0	33	25.4
<u>Other Assignments</u>				
College/University Teaching	1	0.8	5	3.8
Consumer Services	2	1.7	3	2.1
Research	<u>2</u>	<u>1.7</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.8</u>
Sub-Total	<u>5</u>	<u>4.2</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6.7</u>
TOTAL	120	99.9	130	99.9

TABLE 11.--Number of Hours Dietetic Professionals Work Per Week.

Range of Hours	Current Job		Previous Job		Differences*
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Less than 24 hours	24	20.0	17	13.1	(+) 6.9
21-30 Hours	10	8.3	7	5.4	(+) 2.9
31-40 Hours	67	55.8	91	70.0	(-) 14.2
Over 40 Hours	15	12.5	11	8.5	(+) 4.0
No Response	<u>4</u>	<u>3.3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3.1</u>	
TOTAL	120	99.9	130	100.1	

* Differences shown for current job.

Weekend and Holiday Work Requirements

The data reported by dietetic professionals regarding weekend and holiday responsibilities of their current and previous jobs are summarized in Table 12.

These findings clearly indicate that the survey participants are working fewer weekends and holidays, confirming the possibility that duties once performed by dietitians are to some extent delegated to dietary supportive personnel. The writings of Kline and Dowling (14) lend unified support to the use of dietary supportive personnel such as diet clerks, dietary technicians, and qualified food supervisors to assume responsibilities that would relieve dietitians of

TABLE 12.--Weekend and Holiday Work Requirements.

Responsibilities	Current Job		Previous Job	
	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Weekend</u>				
Yes	41	34.2	81	62.3
No	77	64.2	42	32.3
No Response	<u>2</u>	<u>1.7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5.4</u>
TOTAL	120	100.1	130	100.0
<u>Holiday</u>				
Yes	34	28.3	59	45.4
No	81	67.5	50	38.5
No Response	<u>5</u>	<u>4.2</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>16.2</u>
TOTAL	120	100.0	130	100.1

routine and repetitive tasks. Two major advantages of this approach are (a) it would make the dietitian available for functioning as a part of the medical team, and (b) better utilization of dietitians would help to alleviate the shortage of dietitians.

Percentage of Time Devoted to
Eight Professional Activities

Respondents were asked to indicate the percentage of employed time, for their current and previous jobs, they devoted to each of eight professional activity areas:

(a) administrative duties, (b) nutrition counseling (therapeutics), (c) food production and service (management), (d) inservice staff and/or employee training, (e) product development, (f) classroom teaching, (g) management consulting, and research. Figure 2 shows a comparative analysis of the percentage group response reported for six time percentage ranges for each professional activity for current and previous jobs.

Percents of group response indicating employed time devoted to eight types of professional activity in current and in previous jobs are detailed in Table 13. Differences in group percentage responses between current and previous job data are also shown.

From these summary data it is apparent that some respondents are currently and/or were previously involved in all eight of the professional activities listed. It's also apparent that the assigned combination of duties of dietary responsibilities depend upon the particular requirements of the positions they hold and the operational needs of the institutions, agencies or businesses which employ them.

Within the limits of these data it appears that in current jobs fewer respondents are involved in activities related to food production and service than was true in previous jobs. All other activities listed indicated an increase in percent of group participation for current jobs

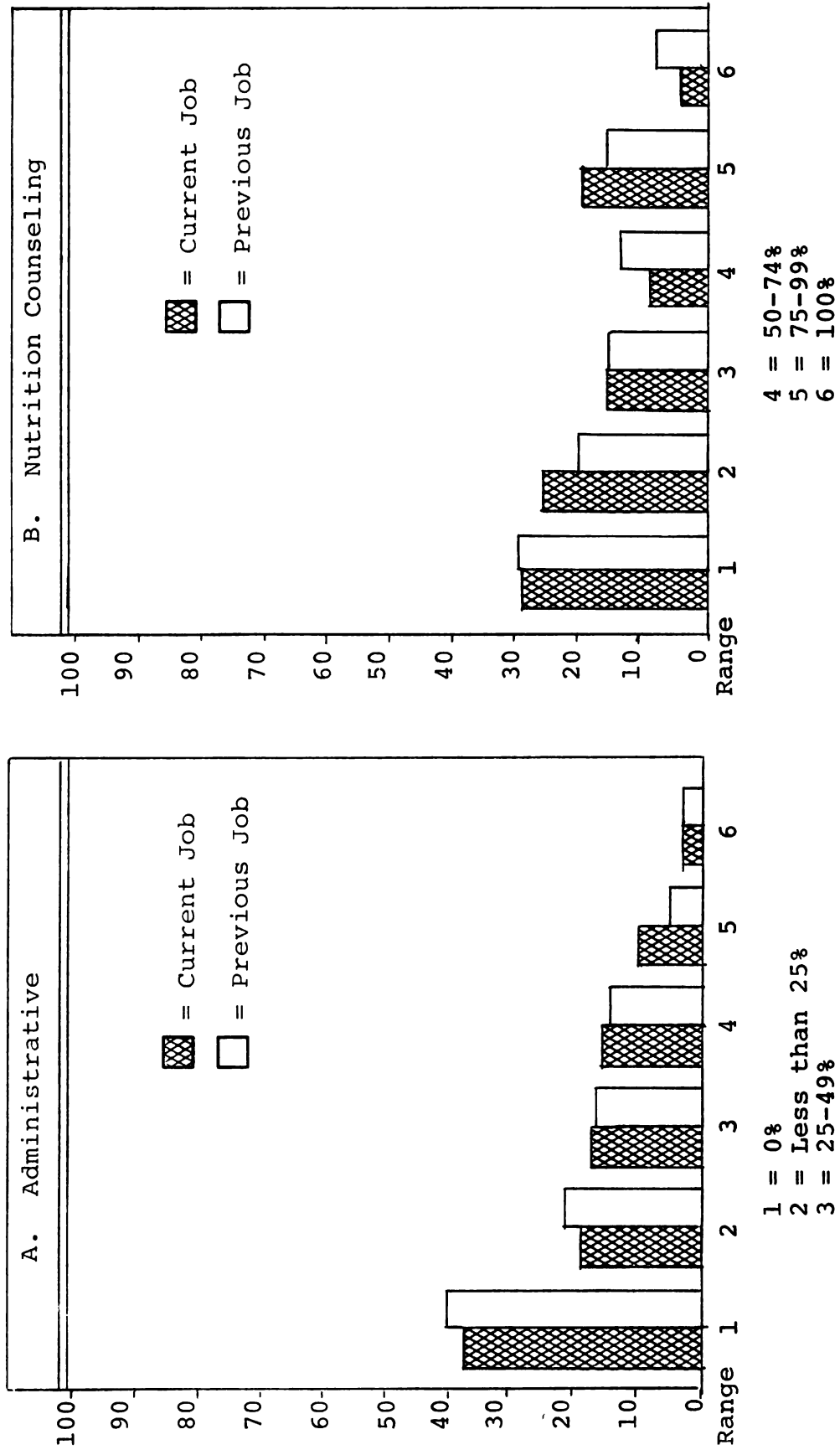


Figure 2.--Percentage Comparison of Respondents Devoting Time to Professional Activities for Current and Previous Jobs.

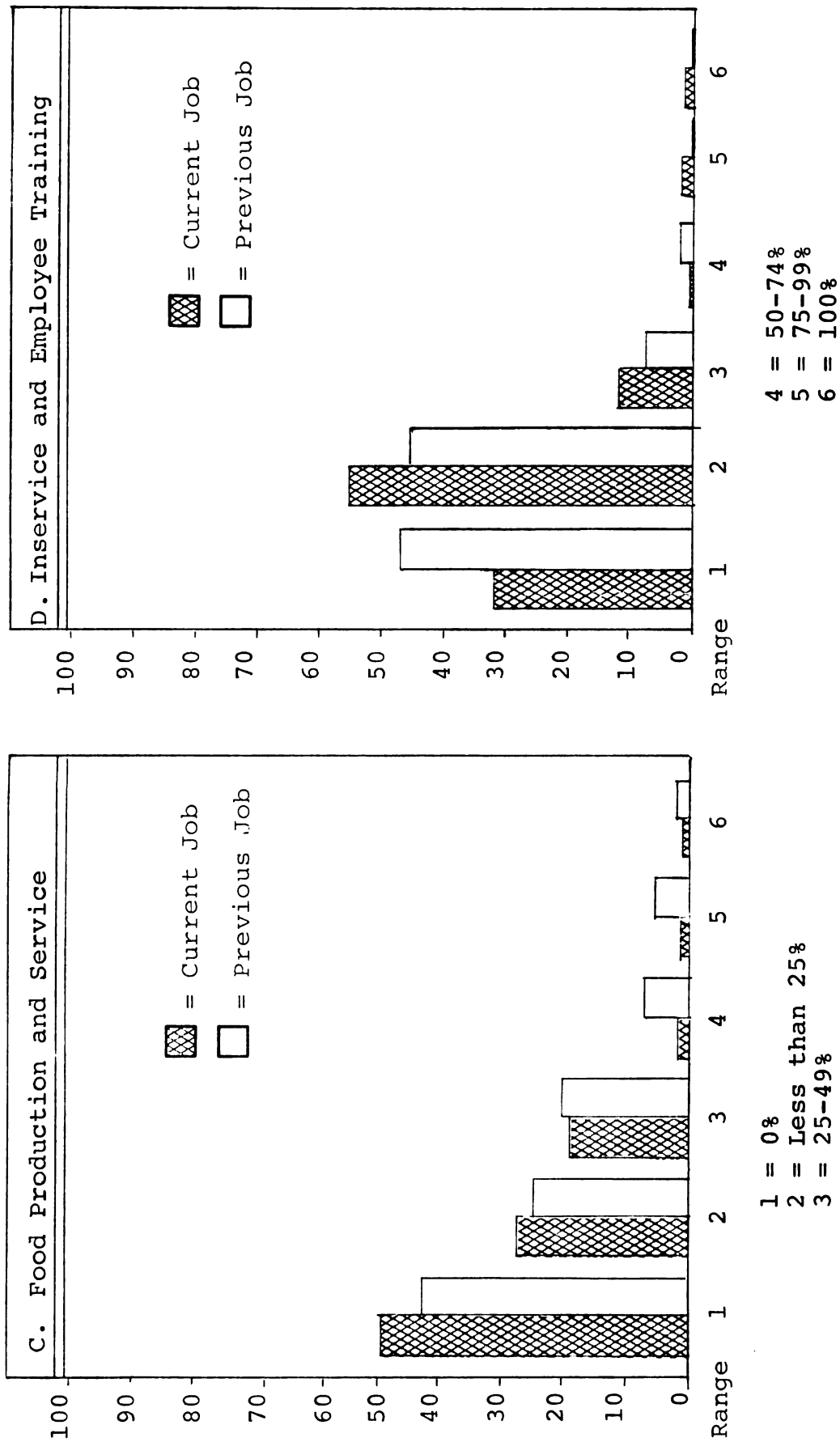


Figure 2.--Percentage Comparison of Respondents Devoting Time to Professional Activities for Current and Previous Jobs.

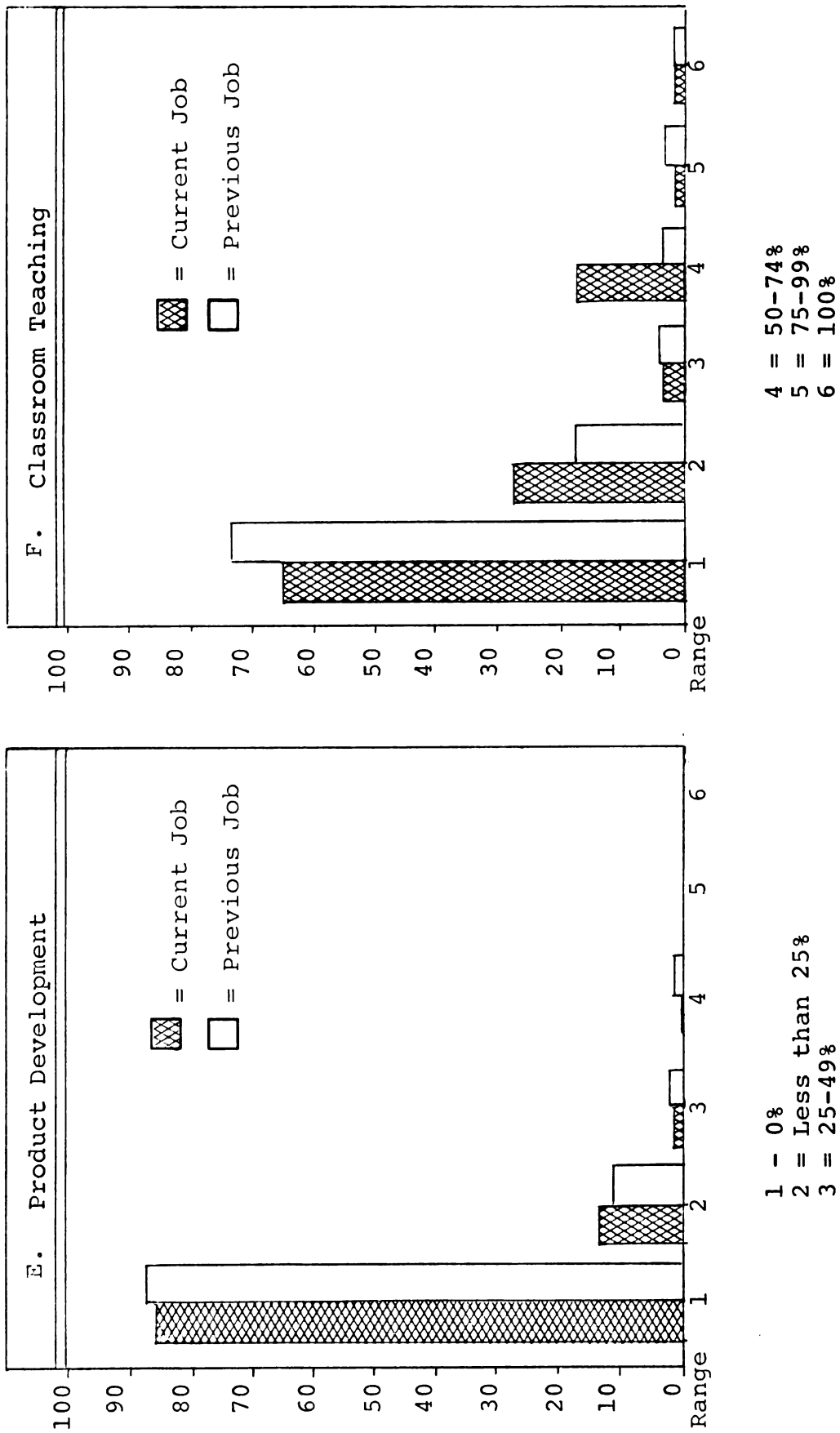
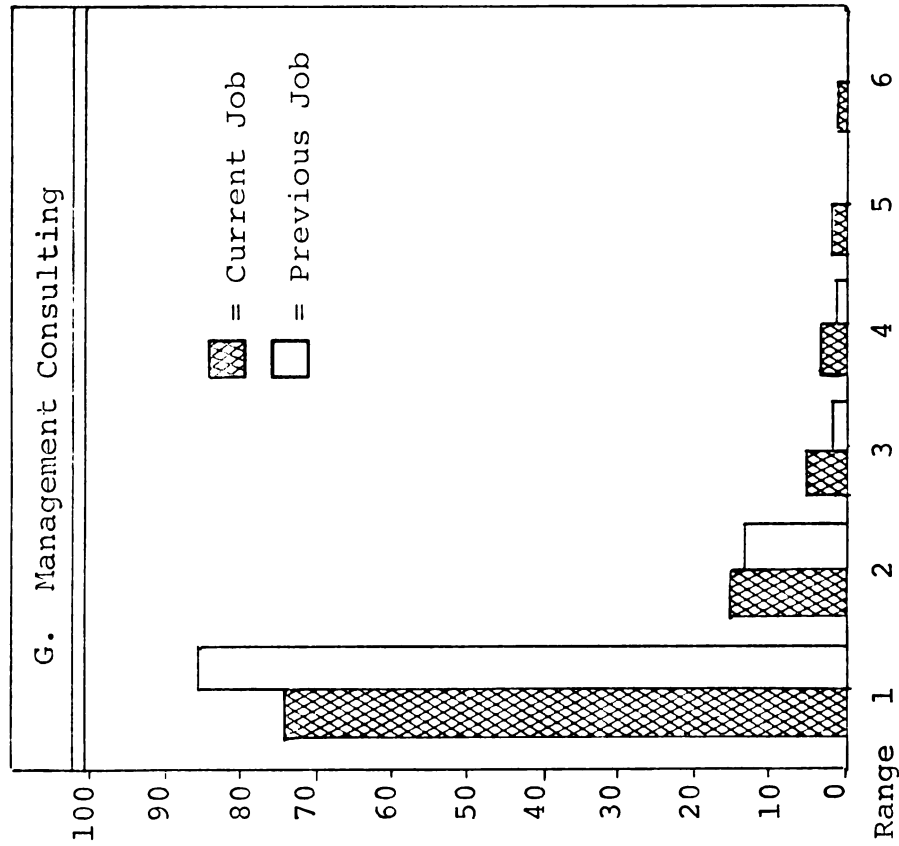
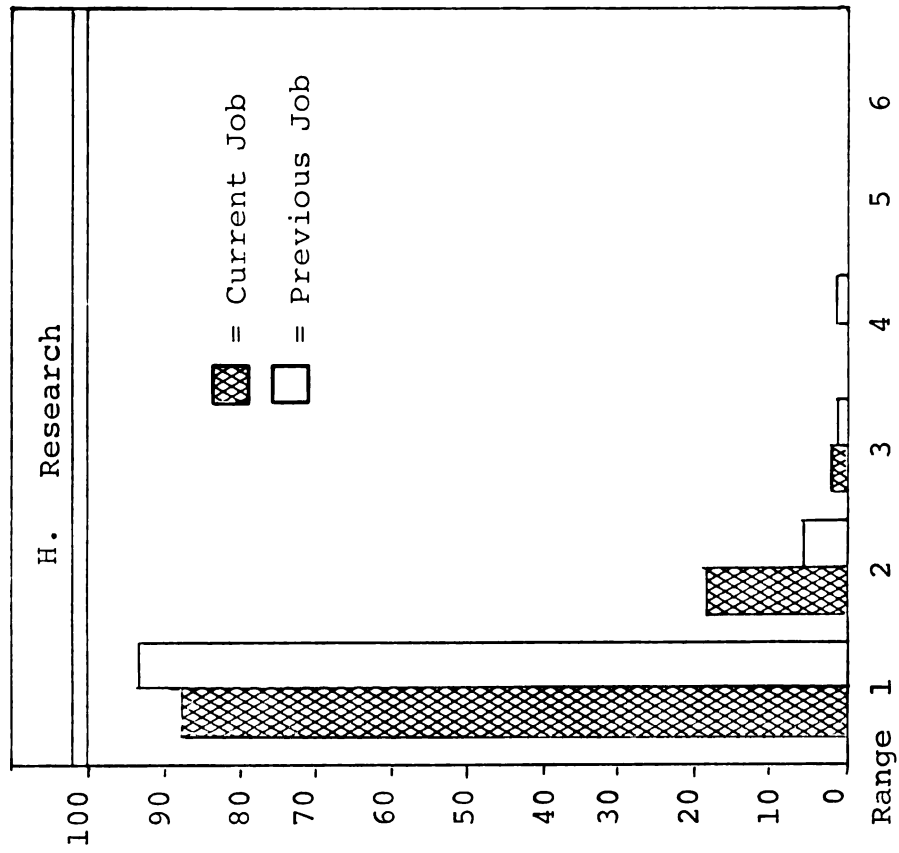


Figure 2.--Percentage Comparison of Respondents Devoting Time to Professional Activities for Current and Previous Jobs.



1 - 0%
 2 = Less than 25%
 3 = 25-49%



4 = 50-74%
 5 = 75-99%
 6 = 100%

Figure 2.--Percentage Comparison of Respondents Devoting Time to Professional Activities for Current and Previous Jobs.

TABLE 13.--Types of Professional Activity Involvement: Percent of Group Response for Current and Previous Jobs.

Professional Activities	Current Job		Previous Job		Differences ^a	
	No. ^b	%	No. ^c	%	No.	%
1. Nutrition Counseling (Therapeutic) .	86	71.7	93	71.5	(+)	0.2
2. Inservice Staff/Employee Training	82	68.3	70	53.8	(+)	14.5
3. Administrative Duties	76	63.3	78	60.0	(+)	3.3
4. Food Production and Service	61	50.8	75	57.7	(-)	6.9
5. Classroom Teaching	40	33.3	36	27.7	(+)	5.6
6. Management Consulting	32	26.7	19	14.6	(+)	12.1
7. Product Development	17	14.2	18	13.8	(+)	0.4
8. Research	15	12.5	8	6.2	(+)	6.3

^aDifferences shown for current job

^b_N = 120

^c_N = 130

over previous jobs. The greatest gains are evident for the activities of inservice staff/employee training, management consulting and research.

Years of Dietetic Work Experience

Responses pertaining to the years of work experience in the field of dietetics when the survey participants accepted their current and previous jobs, detailed according to percent of group response for six time ranges, are reported in Table 14. Among those reporting, the highest percentage of group response for both current and previous jobs was in the combined experience range of 5 years or less (53.5% for current and 73.1% for previous). The data presented in Table 14 appears to indicate that a high proportion of the survey members have been actively engaged in dietary practice during their respective working years and, upon entry into the profession, have remained.

Career Advancement Experiences

Salary commensurate with demonstrated abilities.--Of the 120 currently employed respondents 5 (4.2%) did not answer this question, and of 130 previously employed respondents 3 (2.3%) did not answer the question. Slightly fewer currently employed respondents indicated that their salary was commensurate with their demonstrated abilities than did previously employed respondents. Seventy-seven (64.2%)

TABLE 14.--Years of Dietetic Work Experience Prior to Job Acceptance.

Years of Experience	Current Job		Previous Job	
	No.	%	No.	%
None	13	10.8	29	22.3
Less than 3 years	21	17.5	34	26.2
3 to 5 years	30	25.0	32	24.6
More than 5 years, but less than 10 years	21	17.5	17	13.1
10 to 20 years	28	23.3	13	10.0
Over 20 years	<u>7</u>	<u>5.8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3.8</u>
TOTAL	120	99.9	130	100.0

indicated yes and 38 (31.7%) indicated no for current job. Ninety (69.2%) indicated yes and 37 (28.5%) indicated no for previous job.

Promotion received versus salary increase.--Of 120 currently employed dietetic professionals 8 (6.7%) did not respond and of 130 previously employed professionals 4 (3.1%) did not respond. There were slightly more professionals who received a promotion accompanied by a salary increase on their current job than on their previous job, however neither exceeded 40.0 percent. For current job 47 (39.2%) indicated yes and they had received a promotion and 65 (54.2%) indicated no they had not. Of the 47 currently employed respondents that

indicated yes, 18 (38.3%) had received a salary increase, 29 (61.7%) indicated no they had not. Of the 42 previously employed respondents that had received a promotion, 14 (33.3%) had received a salary increase and 28 (66.7%) had not.

Former job title.--Forty-seven (39.2%) of the 120 currently employed professionals and 42 (32.3%) of the 130 previously employed professionals received a promotion which resulted in a change of job title. See Table 15 for patterns of progression from former job title.

Thirty-two (68.0%) of the 47 currently employed professionals that had received a promotion progressed from the job title of patient service dietitian, 8 (16.9%) progressed from food production, 3 (6.4%) progressed from director of dietetics, and 4 (8.5%) progressed from generalist (patient service and food production). These professionals progressed to a variety of dietetic positions with consultant dietitian being the most frequently mentioned--by 36.2 percent of the professionals.

Twenty-one (50.0%) of the 130 previously employed professionals that had received a promotion also progressed from the job title of patient service dietitian, 10 (23.8%) progressed from food production, 4 (9.5%) progressed from patient service head, 4 (9.5%) progressed from patient service head, 4 (9.5%) progressed from generalist (patient service and food production), and 3 (7.2%) progressed from

TABLE 15.--Patterns of Progression from Former Job Title to Current and/or Previous Job Titles for Dietetic Professionals.

FROM: Former Job Title TO: Current and/or Previous Job Titles	Current Job*		Previous Job**	
	No.	%	No.	%
<u>FROM: Patient Service</u>				
TO: Consultant	10	21.3	--	--
Patient Service Head	8	17.0	13	31.0
Food Production	4	8.5	2	4.8
Food Service Director	4	8.5	6	14.3
Chief Therapeutic Dietitian	4	8.5	--	--
Teaching (In-Service Education)	<u>2</u>	<u>4.2</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>
Sub-Total	32	68.0	21	50.0
<u>FROM: Patient Service Head</u>				
TO: Food Production	--	--	1	2.4
Teaching (In-Service Education)	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7.1</u>
Sub-Total	--	--	4	9.5
<u>FROM: Food Production</u>				
TO: Patient Service	--	--	10	23.8
Consultant	4	8.5	--	--
Patient Service Head	2	4.2	--	--
Asst. Director of Food Service	1	2.1	--	--
Director of Food Service	<u>1</u>	<u>2.1</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>
Sub-Total	8	16.9	10	23.8
<u>FROM: Director of Food Service</u>				
TO: Consultant	3	6.4	--	--
Patient Service	--	--	2	4.8
Food Production	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2.4</u>
Sub-Total	3	6.4	3	7.2
<u>FROM: Generalist (Patient Service & Food Prod.)</u>				
TO: Food Service Director	3	6.4	3	7.1
Patient Service Head	<u>1</u>	<u>2.1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2.4</u>
Sub-Total	<u>4</u>	<u>8.5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9.5</u>
TOTAL	47	99.8	42	100.0

*Current Job N=47
 **Previous Job N=42

director of food service. These professionals progressed to a variety of dietetic positions with patient service head being the most frequently mentioned (31.0%) and closely followed by patient service dietitian (23.8%).

Denial of consideration for better or different job.--Ten (8.3%) of the 120 currently employed professionals surveyed declined to answer this question. Only 4 (3.3%) of the currently employed group stated they had been denied consideration for a better (or different) job in the dietary department of their employing institution, agency or business firm. Previous job response data for this question (130 respondents) indicated that 13 (10.0%) did not complete the question, and 13 (10.0%) reported they had been denied consideration for a better (or different) job by their previous employers.

These findings suggest that only a very small percentage of the participants of this study had encountered unfair employment practices with respect to available job opportunities within their respective places of employment. Even though 54.2 percent of the 120 currently employed dietitians had not received promotions from their respective employers, only 3.3 percent felt they had been denied consideration for a better or different position within the organization. Although the percentages were slightly higher, the same was generally true for the 130 participants

who reported on their previous job situations; 64.6 percent had not received promotions but only 10.0 percent felt that they had been denied consideration for available job changes within their employing organization.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify some of the reasons why professionally qualified dietitians who reside in Michigan reveal the professional employment profiles they do. It was hoped that identification of these factors and their relative influence on the individuals surveyed would provide insight for educators who are concerned with increasing the supply of dietitians and for employers who are in need of expanding their dietary services but are finding it difficult to employ qualified professionals to support their needs adequately.

The underlying assumption was that the central problem of career mobility for professionally trained dietitians leads to a cul-de-sac which offers minimal recompense for experience, intelligence and energy, and that better utilization of employed dietitians depends largely upon improving career advancement opportunities.

The data gathering device chosen for this survey was a seven-page mail-back questionnaire which included both open-end and closed questions. The primary objectives were:

1. To extrapolate and identify those variables that contribute to the professional inactivity of Michigan members of the American Dietetic Association, and
2. To identify those factors that contribute to the diverse mobility of Michigan members of the American Dietetic Association.

An initial sample of 200 professionally qualified Michigan dietitians who were 1973 members of the American Dietetic Association residing in the Lower Peninsula was randomly selected for study. Usable returns were received from 160 (80.0%) of those contacted. Questionnaire item analyses were based on the total number of responses received for each question. For ease in reporting, the study findings reported parallel the sub-divisions used in the design of the survey instrument (Appendix, pp. 93 to 101).

Summary of Survey Findings

Personal-Professional Characteristics

In order to develop a general profile of dietetic professionals in Michigan, respondents were asked to identify five personal characteristics, professional data which collectively characterize the respondents' membership in the American Dietetic Association, and their current employment status. Tabulations of these data indicated that:

1. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents were female and only two percent were male.
2. The majority (85.8%) of the respondents were nearly evenly distributed over the age ranges of 25 to 34, 35 to 44, and 45 to 54. Less than two percent were under 25, 30 percent were under 35, and 13 percent were 55 or over.
3. Seventy-one percent of the respondents were married, 22 percent single and seven percent separated/divorced/widowed.
4. Seventy-five percent of the respondents had one or more children in at least one of six age ranges that were coordinated with the generally accepted age levels for education.
5. There were 18 (12.4%) minority group members which included Black/Afro American, Oriental, Spanish American, and American Indian.
6. Based on two 20-year periods, 34 percent of the respondents joined the American Dietetic Association between 1934-1953, and 66 percent became members during the period of 1954-1973.
7. The majority (92.0%) of the respondents were active registered members of the American Dietetic Association. Of the 12 who were not registered, five were active members, four were life members and three were retired.
8. The majority (88.8%) qualified for American Dietetic Association membership by completing an internship after earning a bachelor degree.
9. The majority (75.1%) of respondents were currently employed full-time or part-time in the field of dietetics, 2.5 percent were employed outside the field of dietetics, and 22.5 percent were unemployed. The three major reasons mentioned by those employed outside the field were: (a) higher salaries available outside the dietetic profession, (b) more advantageous fringe benefits, and (c) a scarcity of jobs for dietitians in their localities.

10. The major reason indicated for unemployment was that the respondents were full-time homemakers--not seeking employment. To a far lesser degree some were attending graduate school, a few were retired, and a few were physically unable to work.
11. Among Michigan's professionally qualified dietitians, minority professionals with family responsibilities are more likely to be active practitioners than their non-minority counterparts.

Locating Professional Employment

Respondents were asked to give their opinions regarding opportunities for learning about professional vacancies in the field of dietetics, the methods they had used to find employment, the number of job offers received from each of these methods, and why they had not used some of the other methods suggested by the researcher. Responses to these questions revealed that:

1. Over half (57.6%) of the respondents felt their opportunities for learning about professional job vacancies in the field of dietetics were excellent to good. Slightly less than half (42.4%) felt their opportunities in this regard were poor to very poor.
2. A total of twelve methods commonly available to dietitians when searching for professional employment were cited by the survey respondents. Two of the most frequently mentioned methods used by the survey participants were telephoned and/or sent letters of inquiry to potential employers (57.5%) and inquired among former classmates and/or professional colleagues (45.0%).
3. In all cases, the users of each of the twelve methods had experienced positive results (1 to 3 job offers).

4. The reason most frequently indicated by respondents for not using a particular method to locate employment opportunities was that it had not been personally necessary (89.2%-95.8% for each method).

Characteristics of Current and Previous Jobs

Findings relevant to the characteristics of the respondents' current and previous jobs which may affect career advancement resulted in the following:

1. A large proportion (74.2%) of the respondents had only been employed in their current jobs for less than 10 years. Of these, nearly half had completed less than three years of service.
2. A very high percentage (82.3%) of the respondents rated their current job as excellent or good.
3. Two-thirds of those surveyed viewed their current job situation as personally stable: 53.2 percent planned to remain on their current job indefinitely and 14.5 percent planned to remain until retirement. One-third revealed they were contemplating a personal change within five years or less.
4. The majority (80.7%) of the survey participants indicated four explanations for the whereabouts of their predecessors (the person whom they replaced). Thirty-one and a half percent indicated--working at another institution, agency or business firm, 12.9 percent indicated--they did not know, 12.1 percent indicated--their predecessor had retired, and 24.2 percent indicated--they had no predecessor.
5. It is realized that job choice for women in the field of dietetics is often pre-determined by the employment opportunities of their spouse. In ranking order, the six factors which influenced job choice most, as reported by over 50 percent of the respondents, were:

- (a) challenging assignment, (b) reputation of employer, (c) salary, (d) working hours, (e) future salary prospects, and (f) fringe benefits.
6. The majority (76.2%) of the respondents had left their previous or last job before completing five years of service. Of the remaining 23.8 percent, 11.6 percent had terminated their employment after 5 to 10 years of service, 7.5 percent after 10 to 15 years and 4.8 percent after 15 or more years of service.
 7. The five most frequently indicated reasons for previously employed professionals to change jobs relate to the accommodation and/or fulfillment of family obligations and a desire for professional advancement, namely: (a) family obligations, (b) more challenging job opportunity came along, (c) moved to a different city, (d) personal--other reasons, (e) professional advancement outlook poor.

Professional Employment in the Field of Dietetics

Respondents provided descriptive data concerning the types of current and previous positions held, the conditions of employment for each, and their opportunities for career advancement.

1. The majority of respondents (83.3% for current jobs and 81.1% for previous jobs) were employed in hospitals or non-hospital health care facilities.
2. Geographic mobility across Michigan State boundaries was experienced by 24.3 percent of respondents from their previous to their current job. The majority (75.7%) of the currently employed respondents had held previous jobs in Michigan, 22.4 percent had moved from 16 other states, and 1.9 percent had come from two other countries.

3. Although the survey respondents had had a variety of job titles, the three categories of professional assignment most frequently stated for current and previous jobs were: (a) patient services, (b) food service management, and (c) consulting. There was a marked percentage increase of consultant dietitians from previous jobs (6.9%) to current jobs (22.5%).
4. Over half of the respondents were engaged in professional dietetic activity 31-40 hours per week, 55.8 percent for current jobs and 70.0 percent for previous jobs. Of the remaining respondents, 28.3 percent worked 30 hours per week or less for current jobs--18.5 percent for previous jobs and 12.5 percent worked over 40 hours per week for current jobs and 8.5 percent for previous jobs.
5. Among those reporting, fewer were required to work weekends and holidays on their current jobs than had been true on their previous jobs (or last job if currently unemployed).
6. Comparisons of the percentages of on-the-job time devoted to eight types of professional activities by the respondents in their current and their previous (or last) job indicated that:
 - a. Fewer were involved in activities related to food production and service in their current job than had been true in their previous (last) job.
 - b. For each of the seven remaining activity areas, more of the respondents reported involvement in their current job than had been true in their previous (last) job. Percent of group increases revealed by the comparative data for each of these activity areas were: inservice staff/employee training--14.5 percent, management consulting--12.1 percent, research--6.3 percent, classroom teaching--5.6 percent, administrative duties--3.3 percent, product development--0.4 percent and nutrition and diet counseling--0.2 percent.

7. Findings relative to the number of years of dietetic work experience the respondents had had prior to acceptance of their current job and their previous (last if unemployed) job revealed that in both cases more than half had five years or less professional experience (53.5% for their current job and 73.1% for their previous job).
8. About two-thirds of the survey participants felt that their salary was commensurate with their demonstrated abilities in their current job or in their previous (last if unemployed) job (64.2% with respect to current jobs and 69.2% with respect to previous [last] jobs).
9. Less than 40 percent of those reporting indicated that in their current job or in their previous (last if unemployed) job promotions had been accompanied by an increase in salary (38.3% with respect to current jobs and 33.3% with respect to previous [last] jobs).
10. Among those respondents who had received promotions, 68 percent of those currently employed had progressed from positions involving only therapeutic nutrition and patient care responsibilities to positions requiring a broader range of professional responsibilities and consultant services. With respect to their previous (last if unemployed) jobs about 50 percent of the respondents who had received promotions had been advanced to division head or supervisory assignments within therapeutic-patient care units.
11. With respect to both current jobs and previous (last if unemployed) jobs, relatively few survey participants were of the opinion they had been denied consideration for better or different jobs by their respective employers (3.6% reporting about their current employers and 11.1% reporting about their previous [last] employers).

Conclusions and Implications

The findings of this study appear to support the underlying assumption and the two objectives formulated. From this attempt to ascertain some of the factors that affect career mobility among Michigan's professionally qualified dietitians, some of the determinants evolve.

Findings from this investigation indicate that the majority of Michigan dietetic professionals (98.0%) are female and that 22.5 percent of these professionals are presently unemployed. This evidence implies that there is a need for The American Dietetic Association and educators to study current and future trends in employment developments--particularly the increase in the number of women returning to the labor force.

Findings from this investigation concerning unemployment, paralleled with current trends of increased labor force participation among adult women, suggest that The American Dietetic Association should:

- a. become more cognizant of these unemployed dietetic professionals that are desirous of returning to work,
- b. determine the requirements of unemployed professionals for their return to work,
- c. make adaptive efforts, whenever and wherever possible, to change and/or liberalize the present qualifying systems to enable the unemployed professionals to meet the required needs for return to work, and

- d. selectively communicate such required needs to those professions and/or related disciplines from which cooperation and assistance is needed.

All twelve methods of locating employment commonly available to dietitians had been used by some of the study participants. In all cases the users of each of the twelve methods had experienced positive results (1-3 job offers). However, findings with regard to opportunities for qualified professionals to learn about job vacancies in the field of dietetics imply that more effective means of informing dietitians about such vacancies should be developed. It is conceivable that such efforts could attract more persons to the field of dietetics and encourage those already in the field to remain.

Among the currently employed professionals surveyed there is very little indication that they were dissatisfied with their jobs. Two-thirds of those surveyed viewed their jobs as personally stable whereas only one-third revealed that they were contemplating a personal change within five years. For women, this phenomenon (the contemplation of a change in employment) occurs more often when the pursuance and/or continuation of employment is dependent upon the employment stability of the spouse and the priority demands of the family.

The findings from this study imply that lateral positional mobility, reportedly a common occurrence among dietetic professionals, should be viewed as a positive

asset to employing institutions. It seems reasonable to refute existing folklore that immobilizes the professionally qualified dietitian and to sanction career mobility. For some, career mobility provides an escape from provincialism, exposure to a variety of intellectual settings, and a critical examination of one's ideas by different audiences--undoubtedly strengthening the preparedness and competence of professional dietitians.

One manifestation of lateral positional mobility is the interruption and/or change in staff composition for the employer. On the other hand, new personnel can mean new ideas, new orientations and new vitality from which presently employed professionals can and should benefit. Some career mobility is good and should not be construed otherwise. However, regardless of cause, excessive interruptions in employment give rise to a high turnover rate which is disruptive to organizational functions.

Most frequently, professional dietitians leave the labor force to accommodate or fulfill family obligations. There is reason to believe that such professionals have only left the field of dietetics temporarily and will eventually seek re-entry into the labor force. There is need for educational institutions and professional societies to develop innovative teaching and learning methods such as self-instructional programs that can simultaneously extend

higher education alternatives to pursuants of dietetic careers as well as provide unemployed dietetic professionals with optional means to prepare themselves for successful re-entry into the field.

Two reasons frequently indicated by the respondents of this study for leaving their previous jobs were that more challenging job opportunities came along and that the professional advancement outlook for them was poor. These findings suggest that employers need to make a concerted effort to improve career advancement opportunities for dietitians and to make better use of their capabilities to retain their professional services.

The success of improving dietetic career advancement opportunities may be enhanced by the efficacy of credentialing--the recognition of a standard level of professional competence to insure that a sufficient number of qualified professionals have opportunities for career mobility. This can be accomplished best by eliminating as many unnecessary obstacles to career advancement and job change as possible, so long as such activities are consistent with the maintenance of adequate professional standards. In the opinion of this investigator, the two modes of credentialing presently used by the American Dietetic Association--membership certification and registration--do not maximize the Association's potential in addressing the career advancement opportunity problems encountered by active practitioners.

The majority of professionals participating in this study were (or have been) employed in hospitals and/or non-hospital health care facilities. The highest concentration of job responsibilities were in patient services. There was some evidence that employment opportunities for dietitians as consultants are increasing. From these findings it appears that dietetic positions involving direct patient services and consulting are both available and attractive to active practitioners. It is reasonable to expect that the need for such services in the future will grow in response to a growing population, to a greater equality of access to medical care for all social and economic groups, and to the discovery of more and more illness/disability relating to nutritional problems.

Only a few of the professionals surveyed were of the opinion that they had been denied consideration for a better or different position by their respective employers. This finding suggests that within many institutions the levels of professional expertise needed to provide essential dietary services are limited. Within the organizational frameworks, the real need is to employ a sufficient number of qualified dietitians to meet the volume of specialized and/or individualized dietary service requirements of the institutional clientele. For the majority of dietary professionals, therefore, recognition and acknowledgment of professional service and expertise will, of situational

necessity, be subject to reward by raises in pay, increased employee benefits and/or employer acclaim.

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APPENDIX

College of Human Ecology - Department of Food Science & Human Nutrition

January 1974

Dear Michigan Dietetic Association Member:

The Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Michigan State University is conducting a study of factors which have influenced employment mobility among 200 selected professionally-qualified dietitians in Michigan. We hope you will be willing to participate in the study.

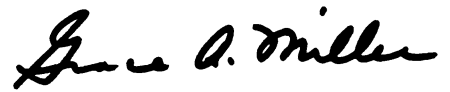
The major purposes of this survey are (1) to identify the various factors which have influenced Michigan Dietitians to change positions within the field or to leave the profession temporarily or permanently, and (2) to identify the general factors associated with the current professional inactivity of many of the members of our State Association.

As educators of dietitians, we are concerned with increasing the supply of professionally-prepared dietitians for employers who are finding it increasingly difficult to find qualified professionals to adequately support their current and projected dietary service needs. This information, we believe, will provide insight for educators and employers relative to the dominant forces which influence career selection, job mobility, and professional employment stability among those with expressed interest in the field.

At first glance, this survey questionnaire may appear long and detailed. However, a concerted effort has been made to design a response format to minimize the time required for recording your responses. Your cooperation in returning the completed form by February 15 will be sincerely appreciated. Your responses will be kept completely confidential. If you do not wish to participate, please return the unanswered form in the pre-addressed envelope provided.

Sincerely yours,


Gilbert A. Leveille, Ph.D.
Professor and Chairman


Grace A. Miller, Ph.D., R.D.
Professor - Research


Linda M. Richards, M.S., R.D.
Teaching Assistant

PART I. PERSONAL-PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION:

- a. Sex: _____(0) Female _____(1) Male
- b. Age: _____(0) Under 25 _____(3) 45 to 54
_____ (1) 25 to 34 _____(4) 55 +
_____ (2) 35 to 44
- c. Marital Status: _____(0) Single _____(2) Separated or Divorced
_____ (1) Married _____(3) Widowed
- d. Children: Number: _____ Age of each: _____
- e. Member of a minority group?
_____ (0) Yes Which one? _____
_____ (1) No

2. AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP:

- a. When did you first join the Association? _____
(year)
- b. What is your current membership classification? Check one.
_____ (0) Active-Registered _____ (3) Honorary
_____ (1) Active-Not Registered _____ (4) Retired
_____ (2) Life _____ (5) Other (please specify) _____

- c. How did (or will) you meet the membership eligibility requirements? Check one.
_____ (0) Coordinated Undergraduate Program
_____ (1) Bachelor Degree + Internship
_____ (2) Bachelor Degree + Preplanned Supervised Experience Program
_____ (3) Master's Degree + Experience
_____ (4) Doctoral Degree
_____ (5) Honored by the Association
_____ (6) Other (please explain) _____

3. PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT: CURRENT STATUS

Directions: This question has three parts. After you have responded to part a, complete part b or part c, only if applicable.

a. Extent of employment: Check one.

- ☐ (0) Full-Time Dietitian (30 hrs. or more/wk)
- ☐ (1) Part-Time Dietitian (less than 30 hrs./wk)
- ☐ (2) Full-Time (not in the field of Dietetics)
- ☐ (3) Part-Time (not in the field of Dietetics)
- ☐ (4) Unemployed at present
- ☐ (5) Other _____
(please describe)

b. If currently employed outside of the Dietetic Profession, please indicate your reason(s). Check as many as apply.

- ☐ (0) Present job is more challenging
- ☐ (1) Higher salaries available outside the Profession
- ☐ (2) More advantageous fringe benefits
- ☐ (3) Better opportunity for personal advancement
- ☐ (4) Jobs for dietitians are scarce in my locality
- ☐ (5) Fewer evening, weekend, and holiday work hours required
- ☐ (6) Other reason(s) not covered above: (please explain) _____

c. If currently unemployed, please indicate the reason(s): Check as many as apply.

- ☐ (0) Attending graduate school full-time
- ☐ (1) Full-time homemaker - not seeking employment
- ☐ (2) Temporarily out of work - actively seeking employment
- ☐ (3) Full-time job opportunities for dietitians are scarce in my locality.
- ☐ (4) Part-time job opportunities for dietitians are scarce in my locality.
- ☐ (5) Physically unable to work at present
- ☐ (6) Retired - not interested in further employment
- ☐ (7) Other reason(s) not covered above: (please explain) _____

4. IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING ABOUT JOB VACANCIES IN THE FIELD OF DIETETICS? Check one.

- ____ (0) EXCELLENT. Vacancies are well publicized. Chances are good that dietitians will learn about professional vacancies for which they might qualify.
- ____ (1) GOOD. With some effort, dietitians can learn about most professional vacancies for which they might qualify.
- ____ (2) POOR. Vacancies are poorly publicized. Dietitians seldom learn about many of the job opportunities for which they might qualify.
- ____ (3) VERY POOR. Dietitians rarely learn about professional job vacancies that would interest them. Better methods of informing professional dietitians of job vacancies need to be developed.

5. LOCATING PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

- a. Listed below are some of the methods dietitians use when searching for professional employment. Which of these methods have YOU used and how effective were they? To record your answers:

Use COLUMN A to indicate your use of each method (Yes or No)

Use COLUMN B to enter the number of job offers you have had as a result of using each method

To respond to COLUMN C, see part b, below.

METHODS	(A) METHOD USED	(B) NUMBER OFFERS	(C) REASON(S) NOT USED
(0) Contacted a former/current professor.....			
(1) Consulted a college placement office.....			
(2) Advertised my availability in professional journals			
(3) Telephoned and/or sent letters of inquiry to potential employers.....			
(4) Inquired among former classmates and/or professional colleagues.....			
(5) Answered job advertisements in professional journals.....			
(6) Answered jobs listed in the classified section of newspapers.....			
(7) Consulted a <u>private</u> employment agency.....			
(8) Consulted a <u>public</u> employment agency.....			
(9) OTHER (not covered above) Describe:			

- b. Listed below are reasons sometimes given by professionals for not using certain methods to locate job opportunities. For each of the methods above you have not used, please indicate why. Using Column C above, enter the identifying number(s) of all the reasons listed that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Too expensive | 5. Did not know jobs could be found this way |
| 2. Unprofessional | 6. Has not been necessary for me to use this method |
| 3. Good jobs rarely found by this method | 7. OTHER (describe): _____ |
| 4. Afraid employer would find out | |

PART III. JOB CHARACTERISTICS: CURRENT AND PREVIOUS

This section of the questionnaire pertains to those characteristics of your current and previous jobs which may have affected your career advancement. If you are not presently employed, omit question 6(a-e); if this is your first job, omit question 7(a+b).

6. CURRENT JOB: (your present position)

a. Approximately how long have you been in your current job? (check one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ (0) Less than 1 year | ☐ (4) 10 to 15 years |
| ☐ (1) 1 to 3 years | ☐ (5) 15 to 20 years |
| ☐ (2) 3 to 5 years | ☐ (6) 20 to 25 years |
| ☐ (3) 5 to 10 years | ☐ (7) Over 25 years |

b. At the present time, how do you rate your current job? (check one)

- ☐ (0) Excellent, better than I expected
- ☐ (1) Good, about as good as it should be
- ☐ (2) Fair, just so-so
- ☐ (3) Poor, not as good as it could be
- ☐ (4) Very poor

c. How long do you plan to remain at your current job? (check one)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ (0) Only a few months | ☐ (4) Indefinitely |
| ☐ (1) 1 to 2 years, at most | ☐ (5) Until retirement |
| ☐ (2) 2 to 3 years, at most | ☐ (6) Other (explain) _____ |
| ☐ (3) Not more than 5 years | _____ |

d. Where is the person whom you replaced? (check one)

- ☐ (0) Had no predecessor
- ☐ (1) Working at another institution, agency or business firm
- ☐ (2) Working at this same institution, agency or business firm in an advanced position
- ☐ (3) Has left the profession
- ☐ (4) Attending graduate school
- ☐ (5) Retired
- ☐ (6) Deceased
- ☐ (7) Don't know
- ☐ (8) Other (please specify) _____
- _____

6. CURRENT JOB: (continued)

- e. How important was each of the factors below in your decision to accept your current job? (Check each factor for its degree of importance to YOU.)

FACTOR	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	OF NO IMPORTANCE
1. Salary				
2. Future salary prospects				
3. Fringe benefits				
4. Advancement opportunities				
5. Locality/Climate				
6. Working Hours				
7. Reputation of employer				
8. Research opportunities				
9. Challenging assignment				
10. Additional income				
11. Bored with staying at home				
12. Other (explain) _____				

7. PREVIOUS JOB: (job before current one or last job, if currently unemployed)

- a. Approximately how long were you at your previous job? (check one)

_____ (0) Less than 1 year _____ (3) 5 to 10 years
 _____ (1) 1 to 3 years _____ (4) 10 to 15 years
 _____ (2) 3 to 5 years _____ (5) Over 15 years

- b. Why did you leave your previous job? (check as many as apply)

_____ (00) More challenging job opportunity came along
 _____ (01) Dissatisfied with salary
 _____ (02) Dissatisfied with employment benefits
 _____ (03) Professional advancement outlook poor
 _____ (04) Returned to college/university for advanced study
 _____ (05) Moved to a different city
 _____ (06) Position terminated - became unemployed
 _____ (07) Change in dietary management from institution-operated to contract food management company
 _____ (08) Personal - physical reasons
 _____ (09) Personal - other reasons
 _____ (10) Family obligations
 _____ (11) Mandatory retirement
 _____ (12) Early retirement
 _____ (13) OTHER: (describe) _____

9. PREVIOUS JOB IN THE FIELD OF DIETETICS:

- a. Institution, agency or business
firm you worked for: _____

(City)

(State)

- b. What was your job title? _____

- c. How many hours per week did you work? _____ (hrs./wk.)

Did you work weekends? _____ (0) Yes Holidays? _____ (0) Yes
_____ (1) No _____ (1) No

- d. Approximately how much of YOUR time was devoted to each of the following types of professional activity? Express your answers in % of time.

_____ % 1. Administrative duties

_____ % 6. Classroom Teaching

_____ % 2. Nutrition Counseling
(therapeutics)

_____ % 7. Management Consulting

_____ % 3. Food Production and Service
Management

_____ % 8. Research

_____ % 9. OTHER (please explain) _____

_____ % 4. Inservice staff and/or
employee training

_____ % 5. Product Development

- e. How many years of dietetic work experience
did you have when you accepted this job? _____ (yrs.)

- f. Did you feel your salary was commensurate with your
demonstrated ability to carry out your assigned
duties? _____ (0) Yes _____ (1) No

- g. During the time you worked for this institution, agency, or business firm:

1. Did you receive a promotion(s)? _____ (0) Yes _____ (1) No

If yes, did you also receive an increase
in salary? _____ (0) Yes _____ (1) No

What were the other job titles you had during this time of employment?
Please indicate below.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

2. Were you ever denied consideration for a better (or different) job in the
dietary department of this institution, agency, or business firm?

_____ (0) Yes

_____ (1) No

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH THE STUDY

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD SCIENCE AND HUMAN NUTRITION

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

February 18, 1974

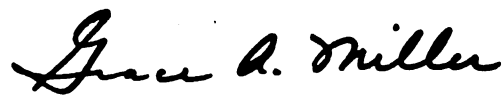
Dear Michigan Dietetic Association Member:

You were among 200 professionally-qualified dietitians in Michigan selected to participate in an employment mobility study which is being conducted by the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Michigan State University. A questionnaire requesting information about your professional employment status and your views concerning means available for professionals to learn about job vacancies in the field of dietetics was mailed to you on January 8. We had hoped you would be interested and willing to participate.

To date, we have not received a response from you. In the event that our initial mailing failed to reach you or has been mislaid, a duplicate questionnaire form and a pre-addressed return envelope are enclosed for your convenience. Your cooperation in completing and returning the enclosed form by March 1 will be sincerely appreciated. If you have already mailed your response, please disregard this follow-up letter and accept our sincere thanks for helping us to make this a more meaningful study. If you do not wish to participate, please return the unanswered form in the pre-addressed envelope provided.

Sincerely yours,


Gilbert A. Leveille, Ph.D.
Professor and Chairman


Grace A. Miller, Ph.D., R.D.
Professor - Research


Linda M. Richards, M.S., R.D.
Teaching Assistant

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