

Title: Interdisciplinary management for malnutrition in hospital.

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Background:

Malnutrition is common in the hospital setting and can adversely affect clinical outcomes and costs. One third of patients in developed countries are malnourished on admission to hospital. This is consistent with the prevalence at Western Health.

Results of intervention studies vary, however managing hospital malnutrition has the potential to improve patient care and clinical outcomes, and reduce costs.

To date in Western Health, there has been limited rollout of meal environment strategies, including volunteer meal assistance and communal dining programs.

Methods:

- Establishment of an allied health led multidisciplinary group advisory committee for program governance and strategic direction.
- Awareness of Malnutrition and the intervention strategies was raised amongst patients, visitors and staff using visual and verbal prompts.
- Multidisciplinary education of staff groups prior to program rollout.

Results:

- A multidisciplinary communal dining 'lunch group' was expanded on the 2 subacute wards
- A Volunteer Meal Assistance Program commenced on the 2 subacute wards.
- A 'Red Domes' program was implemented on the 3 wards for patients requiring professional assistance with feeding.
- Fasting processes reviewed and all minimum standards achieved.
- To date, 600 patients have been assisted by volunteers and 480 patients have attended communal dining.
- Anticipated data for the above programs includes patient intake data, patient satisfaction and staff satisfaction. Preliminary data confirms that 39% of patients are at moderate to high risk of malnutrition.

Discussion:

In addition to nutrition therapy, access to meals, feeding assistance, meal environment, fasting practices needs to be considered to assist in managing and preventing Malnutrition. In order to improve the management of patients at risk of or malnourished across Western Health, four nutrition intervention programs have been simultaneously expanded or commenced from February to June 2015, initially in Williamstown Hospital, Western Health. Anticipated data will measure the feasibility and effectiveness of these programs in managing Malnutrition.