DESIGNING FOR HEALTH AND APPETITE: NUTRITION AND INTERIOR DESIGN PROFESSIONALS CREATE APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENTS TO ACHIEVE MEAL TIME SATISFACTION IN DEMENTIA RESIDENTS OR PARTICIPANTS

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Objective: to assess current practices used by facilities caring for dementia residents to determine their understanding of the benefits of appropriate foodservice environmental design which may contribute to meal satisfaction and reduce unintentional weight loss.

Study Design: One hundred and fifteen surveys were provided to administrators to assess knowledge of menu and design appropriateness of facilities to achieve meal time satisfaction.

Setting/Participants: 31 facilities completed the survey, including elder residential communities, elder daycare support communities, an inpatient acute care hospital, an acute care/rehab unit and Meals on Wheels Senior Center.

Results: 55% of participants allow their dementia residents an hour or longer to consume their meals. Seventy-one percent rate plated meal service and only 2 facilities use family meal service; 41.9% of facilities play background music during periods of eating but no universal design was identified to enhance appetite in all the facilities to reduce unintentional weight loss.

Conclusions: There are still gaps present in the implementation of policies of universal design that were obvious to enhance food intake and mealtime satisfaction in dementia residents. It is apparent that many facilities need to be educated on the appropriate care to enhance mealtime satisfaction and ensure that dementia residents are receiving proper nutritional care.

Potential Implications: Education tailored to the lack of knowledge in these facilities would be beneficial in order to maximize meal satisfaction in the dementia resident. Dietitians need to continue to work with foodservice operators to apply medical nutrition therapy at the center of the plate with a variety of experts in foodservice layout design and operations.

Overriding Objective

The dementia and Alzheimer’s patient experience many physiological and environmental changes which commonly lead to unintentional weight loss and malnutrition, the purpose of the study was to investigate what can be done to improve problems associated with food intake and enhance mealtime satisfaction.

Hypotheses

The hypothesis is that the choices in food selection made by RDs, chefs, foodservice operators and/or interior designers in facilities which care for dementia patients were made to enhance appetite and nutrient dense foods and reduce unintentional weight loss.

Study Design

Descriptive study design

Survey responses were used to determine the administrator’s knowledge of providing an adequate menu and designing a dining service that is appropriate for achieving meal time satisfaction in dementia patients/residents.

Sample: Facilities that care for dementia patients/residents

Types of Facilities

Results

Nutrition Assessment

• Individualizing the dining experience for dementia and Alzheimer’s patients.
• Dining is not just about food intake. It’s a social experience linked to lifelong memories.
• Research suggests that choices in food selection may improve food intake and enhance mealtime satisfaction.
  • Serving favorite Foods
  • Providing a variety of Foods
  • Culturally Familiar Foods
  • Use of less Restrictive Diets

Core Elements

FOOD SERVICE STYLE
NUTRITION ASSESSMENT
ENVIRONMENT

Methods

Survey was developed based on research
Survey responses were used to determine the administrator’s knowledge of providing an adequate menu and designing a dining service that is appropriate for achieving meal time satisfaction in dementia patients/residents.

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Nutrition Assessment

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Conclusion

There are still gaps present in the implementation of policies and activities that can be used to enhance food intake and mealtime satisfaction in dementia patients.

Facilities need to be educated on the appropriate care supported by research to enhance mealtime satisfaction and ensure that dementia patients are receiving proper nutritional care through proper design principles and color and shape of table appointments to enhance appetite.

These interventions may be the difference between dementia patients that are malnourished and those that are meeting their nutritional goals.

Important to get the registered dietitian, chef, and interior designer involved.

Working as a team, these professionals can aid in the eradication of nutrition risk among the dementia population and our meals must be satisfying.

References


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