Food Intake Challenges in Hospitals

Study Title
Barriers to food intake in acute care hospitals: A report of the Canadian Malnutrition Task Force

The Study
A valid questionnaire was given to 890 participating patients at 18 hospitals throughout Canada. The goal was to receive their opinions about barriers and challenges to food intake while in hospital. This study was done in order to find possible solutions for low food intake during an acute care hospital stay, which can worsen already present malnutrition.

What Was Found
• Listed from the most to least common, are barriers to food intake as noted by patients in this study:
  1. Loss of appetite (63.9%)
  2. Not being given food when a meal was missed (69.2%)
  3. Not wanting ordered food (58%)
  4. Feeling too sick to eat (42.7%)
  5. Being interrupted at meals (41.8%)
  6. Being too tired to eat (41.1%)

• Younger patients were more likely than older people to be disturbed at meals and miss meals for tests.
• Certain groups were more likely to experience many barriers of varying types. These patients were:
  a) Malnourished
  b) Women
  c) Experiencing several medical conditions
  d) Eating less than half of their meals

Action to Take
Consider looking for and resolving the barriers to food intake listed above as a way to improve food intake of patients in hospital.

Where to Find the Full Article
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Authors: