

Snack Around the Clock

Questions to the implementation of the Snak-pak:

How is it possible to get the staff to see creative tasks as a natural concern care for the patient and not as an extra task in resource and time?

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– Experiences of
Nutritional Care
at Hospital



Aarhus University Hospital
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Many patients' food intake is insufficient during hospitalisation, about 30 percentages are undernourished. Better nutritional health care has been emphasized, both from National and the European Boards. Focus is to regularly make out nutritional risk screening, monitor and follow up by individualised nutritional care. But practical nutritional care is still not given a high priority and it seems difficult within the organisation of the hospital to optimize the nutritional care.

Objectives of the study

- to compose and serve a 24-hour catering snack 'Snak-pak' connected to the patients nutritional need and acceptance
- to record and analyse the daily between-meals compared to fixed meal schedules
- to describe the experiences from the perspective of patient and staff

Methods

A descriptive intervention study with both a quantitative and a qualitative approach. The study included 97 patients at risk of in-hospital malnutrition admitted at three different units – oncology, lung medicine and orthopaedic, mean stay = 12 days, median age = 61 years. A project assistant nurse served a 24-hour catering pack (2500 kilojoules, 20 grams of protein) to the patients in every admitting day. The patient's entire food intake was daily recorded. Totally 17 of the 97 patients were interviewed about their health state, knowledge of nutritional care and opinion of this kind of catering service. Three groups of staff (n=16) were in focus groups interviewed about their experiences during the intervention period.

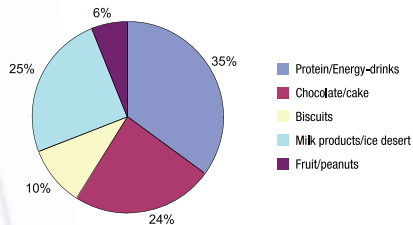
Results

Mean intake of daily cost at kilojoules

	Oncology n=25	Lung Medicine n=41	Orthopaedic n=31	Total n=97
Daily cost	4193	4605	4862	4553
Snak-pak	1934	1659	1891	1828
Total	6127	6290	6753	6381

Recommended mean intake 7000-9000 kilojoules

Mean intake of Snak-pak products in percentage (n=97 patients)



“Bates” and 14 minutes

Snak-Pak turned out to be a good idea, by daily talk and guiding with the project assistant nurse we obtained to increase the single patients mean intake of energy at kilojoules by 29% and plus 13 grams of protein. The main factor was the continuity of the project assistant nurse's contact with the patient, and that the patient could select from the Snak-pak, and also get an explanation why it was important to eat the food. “Bites” nicely packed were the “bate” or temptation. The chronically ill patient with a lot of hospitalizations expresses: “The serving of food has always been on the staffs premises; it looks like changes are ahead. Snak-Pak is a good example; also that hot food is served in the evenings”.

Routines and time

Interviews with the staff all agreed that food of all kind should be made in the hospitals main kitchen, but logistics can be inadequate because of no clear responsibility and task with the staff in ward and also by strict routines of food serving. The staff found that talk and guiding with the patients about food were resource-and time consuming, “It's difficult to talk to the patient about food as a lot of other things is on her mind”. The patient can easily be overlooked in the busyness of the staff, “A lot of patients don't ask for anything”. Special nutritional care is considered by the staff as an extra time consuming task, which they haven't got time for. In the period of intervene the staff have experienced the patients liking of the Snak-Pak and have got creative ideas for “snacks” or in between meals.