

Prevention of malnutrition and BelRAI



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Description of the initiative:

Malnutrition among elderly is a highly underestimated problem. In Belgium, 45% of the screened Belgian seniors (>70 years of age) have a serious risk of malnutrition, 12% are malnourished (1). These numbers indicate the need for tools and guidelines which allow the identification of risk factors for malnutrition and effective interventions in an early stage.

The two main objectives of this project proposal are to

- develop and evaluate a screening tool for 'Early Detection of Malnutrition' in elderly;
- develop guidelines for interventions in home care and residential care settings.

Planned activities, deliverables & timing

- **Step 1.** Identification of risk factors for malnutrition based on variables measured by means of BelRAI assessments (2).
- **Step 2.** Development of a classification model for early detection of malnutrition at individual level with three possible outcomes (0: no malnutrition, 1: risk for malnutrition, 2: malnutrition).
- **Step 3.** Coupling the model outcome with guidelines and effective interventions in home care and residential care settings.
- **Step 4.** Valorisation and dissemination of project results in (inter)national scientific journals.

Timing: Since the risk factors were obtained in a previous research study (2015-2016), the estimated duration of this project is 12 months.

Resources & enablers

- **Personnel:** researchers will be appointed for a period of 12 months (in total 40% on a weekly basis).
- **Financial needs:** i) Personal costs: €28000; ii) Operational costs: €2000 (transportation, e-learning tool, dissemination, ...).



Figure 1. Prevention of malnutrition among elderly.

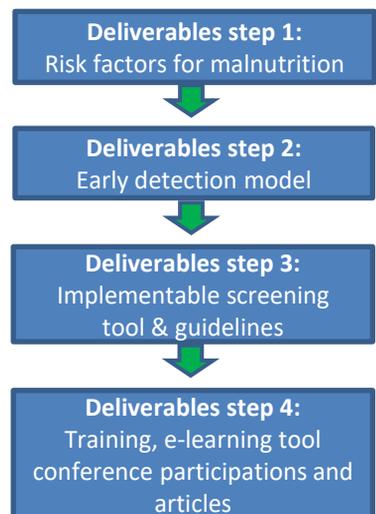


Figure 2. Expected project outcome.

Results & expected impact

- **How will the findings be implemented?** We work in close collaboration with the developers of the BelRAI instrument, which will facilitate the implementation process.
- **How will this project advance patient care/contribute to optimal nutritional care?** A more timely diagnosis and appropriate interventions will prevent the adverse effects of malnutrition.
- **What makes the project innovative?** It is the first study to use the interRAI/BelRAI variables for the development of a 'Early Detection of Malnutrition' screening tool.
- **Will the project be likely to influence national nutrition policy?** In 2018 the BelRAI instrument will be implemented in Belgium. Integration of the model as a Clinical Assessment Protocol in BelRAI guarantees a direct influence in home care and residential care settings.
- **Is the project transferable to other settings/countries?** Being based on internationally validated interRAI variables, the project can be implemented in a broader context.

References:

- 1) Nutricia, "Results of the NutriAction II study", 2013.
- 2) Vanneste, D., Vermeulen, B., & Declercq, A. (2013). Healthcare professionals' acceptance of BelRAI, a web-based system enabling person-centred recording and data sharing across care settings with interRAI instruments: a UTAUT analysis. *BMC medical informatics and decision making*, 13(1), 129.

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