

Nutrition Hub for older adults

Maree Ferguson B App Sc, Grad Dip Nutr Diet, MBA, PhD; Jane Winter BSc, Grad Dip Nutr Diet, MEd, PhD
Contact: Maree Ferguson maree@dietitianconnection.com +61 477185067



Background & Rationale

Little attention has been given to malnutrition occurring amongst older individuals living at home. In Europe, Northern America and Australia around one in four older persons (>60 years) are living alone, which increases with age. Older adults express a desire to continue living at home but this requires optimal nutrition, presenting a challenge for aged care services as this population continues to grow globally. Currently there is no accessible 'one stop shop' providing resources and information about nutrition interventions that can empower older adults and/or their carers.

Objectives and scope

To improve the nutrition and wellbeing of vulnerable older adults and reduce pressure on aged care services through development and delivery of a Nutrition Hub built by nutrition experts for health care professionals (HCPs), carers and older adults themselves.

Planned activities & deliverables

Initial steps will be to confirm resource needs of target audience (survey); establish partnerships with key HCPs such as primary care nurses, and consumer caregiver groups; development and/or collation of resources: fact sheets; FAQs; recipes; available services; professional education such as webinars and eDMs; development of web-based platform: user friendly; easy to navigate; interactive.

Concrete deliverables of the project and what achievements are possible in the next 12 and 24 months?

The key deliverable is a live Nutrition Hub web-based platform by October 2021.

In the next 12 months, we can deliver a platform based across Australia. The following 12 months will allow us to build learnings into an optimized site for other countries.

Resources & enablers

We will utilise the \$30K Euro grant to cover costs for project manager, content expert/writer, graphic designer, and web development.

Success Factors:

- Collaboration with other reputable stakeholders (professional organisations, consumer groups, special interest groups, aged care service providers)
- Promotion of the initiative via these key stakeholders to drive visits to the web-based platform
- Engagement with HCPs to both develop their understanding of the nutritional issues for older adults as well as providing them with a resource for their patients to improve their nutrition and outcomes

Results/outcomes & expected impact

The findings from the pilot in Australia (including both consumer and carer/HCP usage and feedback) will be used as a basis to expand the platform globally and localise to different geographies. The project will advance patient care by addressing the significant problem of nutritional risk amongst frail older adults living in the community. Nutrition is often neglected in the complex needs of older adults and yet is crucial to enable independent living as long as possible.

The project addresses a gap in the delivery of suitable nutrition resources for this vulnerable group and the Nutrition Hub will provide education and information for HCPs, carers and older adults themselves. We were unable to locate a similar Nutrition Hub worldwide.

The project can influence national nutrition policy in the future, through sharing learnings from the Nutrition Hub with policy makers. The project is completely transferrable to other countries.