

Benefits of AHAs leading communal dining in the ABI Unit.

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BACKGROUND

Communal dining (CD) on the ABI inpatient ward has shown to lead to several positive patient outcomes, optimizing their level of independence and functional recovery.

Multidisciplinary (MD) AHAs can facilitate CD as they are familiar with most patients' rehabilitation goals and are skilled to support them where necessary.

AIMS

Aims of CD are:

- Practice swallow and self-feeding skills.
- Increase food intake.
- Increase social interaction.
- Provide AHAs the opportunity to strengthen personal skills such as leadership.

RESULTS

A questionnaire among ABI therapists and MD AHAs (n=15) who have supported CD show the following results:

100% of AHAs feel positively about leading CD and believe it strengthens their leadership skills.

Benefits of MD AHAs leading CD include:

- Familiarity with most patients and their rehab goals.
- Able to support patients from different disciplinary angles.



All participants agree that CD improves:

- Opportunity for social interaction.
- Self-feeding skills.
- Food intake.

The absence of CD due to COVID-19 restrictions has had a big impact, underlining the importance of dining communally. Downsides mentioned by participants were:

- Less mealtime assistance. Staff can only support 1 patient at a time.
- Less opportunity for social interaction and to retrain self-feeding skills.

CONCLUSION

MD AHAs leading CD has proven to be beneficial for patients' rehabilitation, and to have a positive effect on the AHAs professional development.

FUTURE DIRECTION

Ongoing education within the multidisciplinary team is recommended to enhance skills and confidence to optimize the CD experience.

REFERENCES

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