Food, Nutrition and the Dining Experience in Aged Care - Submission 2021

Submitted to the Department of Health (January 2021).

Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs) play an important role in the assessment and dietary management of chronic diseases and malnutrition in the elderly, and should be involved in the planning and execution of food service within aged care homes and home delivered meal programs, as well as in the training of aged care staff.

Summary

Improved education and training of staff in aged care facilities and services is essential, with the assistance of APDs. Demonstrating the cost savings, improved health outcomes, and benefits to staff from taking better nutritional care of elderly residents is critical, requiring tailored education resources.

The existing Aged Care Quality Standards are insufficient to protect this group, and updated practical strategies are required to ensure aged care providers comply with food, nutrition and mealtime quality standards.

Malnutrition is of serious concern amongst aged care residents, with improved screening procedures required on a regular basis, and thorough training of staff required annually to be more aware of and combat this concern. Residents at risk of malnutrition must be referred to an APD for intervention strategies.

Discussion

Overall, greater investment, care and training is required within aged care services to ensure the nutrition, meals and dining experiences provided to the elderly are adequately meeting their unique and individual needs for nutrients, and addressing their reduced capacity to care for themselves. Intervention by APDs is critical in developing a quality standards framework to ensure compliance to these standards, and to address concerns around disease nutrition and malnutrition within this group.

For more download our full submission.

Get in touch

If you have questions about this submission, contact us at policy@dietitiansaustralia.org.au