

Understanding the experience of eating and drinking difficulties from the perspective of people living with dementia in residential care homes

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Country

United Kingdom

Title of project/programme

Understanding the experience of eating and drinking difficulties from the perspective of people living with dementia in residential care homes

Source of funding information

Alzheimer's Society

Total sum awarded (Euro)

€ 205,478

Start date of award

01/10/15

Total duration of award in years

4.0

The project/programme is most relevant to:

Alzheimer's disease & other dementias

Keywords

Research Abstract

Introduction: Dysphagia is a term used to describe eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties. An estimated 50% of people living with dementia will develop dysphagia, with this number increasing to up to 93% of people living with dementia in care homes. Eating and drinking is important to meet physical, emotional and social needs and having dysphagia can impact all of these areas. Speech and language therapists (SLT) are the core health profession in providing support for dysphagia.

Aims: The aims of this study are: to understand the experiences of people living with dementia and dysphagia, their family carers and formal care staff; identify care-related factors that impact on their wellbeing; and determine the experiences of SLTs in working with people living with dementia and dysphagia in care homes.

Design and methods: There will be 4 participant groups: people living with dementia; care home staff; family carers; and SLTs. Data will be collected using semi-structured interviews and structured observations (Dementia Care MappingTM) and will be analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Expected outcomes: This is the first study that seeks to explore and understand the experience of dysphagia from the perspective of people living with dementia. The findings of this study will inform care practices for care home staff and healthcare professionals both nationally and internationally to support the physical, emotional and social needs of individuals living with dementia and dysphagia.

Types:

Fellowships

Member States:

United Kingdom

Diseases:

Alzheimer's disease & other dementias

Years:

2016

Database Categories:

N/A

Database Tags:

N/A