

Improving nutrition in people with dementia

May 20 2015

With over 850,000 people with dementia in the UK, ensuring dignity in their care and wellbeing is a critical issue. New research from Bournemouth University, funded by the Burdett Trust, has been investigating how to improve nutrition in people with dementia. With Dementia Week 2015 now underway, new training and subsequent resources based on research from project aim to support busy nursing and caring professionals in their role.

Lead researcher, Dr. Jane Murphy, Associate Professor at Bournemouth University, said "Making sure that people with dementia receive appropriate food and nutrition is a vital part of delivering dignity in care. Eating and drinking become increasingly difficult as dementia progresses, and there is a real risk of people developing malnutrition or extreme weight loss.

Our research is designed to equip frontline staff with the skills and knowledge they need to improve nutrition in people with dementia, whether they are living in care homes or in their own homes. The generous support of the Burdett Trust has enabled us to work with staff in local care homes to develop resources, which we hope will be used by caring professionals all over the country."

Commenting for the Burdett Trust, Dame Christine Beasley said, "We are delighted to have supported this vital area of research. Nutrition is a key issue for people with dementia and for busy frontline staff, it can sometimes be difficult to know exactly how best to support someone.

We are pleased to see the development of the pilot training programme and development of resources, and hope that they will make a real difference to [dementia](#) care practice."

The resources are already being implemented in local Bournemouth [care homes](#), with excellent results. Becky Robson, Home Manager at Waypoints care home in Verwood, said, "Being part of this project has given us factual information regarding the nutritional needs of our residents and highlighted that the average fluid intake was not sufficient.

It showed the need to be innovative and flexible with meals due to the varying activity levels at different times of the residents over a 24 hour period."

Becky explained the impact of the research in the care home she manages, by saying "It will also go a long way to promote and to make acceptable the need to go with what works for each individual, whether that be eating with their fingers, eating while on the move or drinking soup from a bowl."

Provided by Bournemouth University

Citation: Improving nutrition in people with dementia (2015, May 20) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-05-nutrition-people-dementia.html>

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