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Implementation and Effects of a Medication Pass Nutritional Supplement Program in a Long-Term Care Facility a Pilot Study

A 6-month study on the effects of a medication pass nutritional supplement program (MPNSP) in long term care has provided evidence of quality of life improvements for residents. Extendicare Holyrood, in Edmonton, Alberta, conducted the 6-month study designed to determine the most effective method for implementing an interdisciplinary MPNSP.

The study was a result of investigating how nutrition could be increased for residents who were at risk of malnutrition due to various adverse health conditions. Long term care homes have introduced several methods to increase food and nutrition intake for residents at risk including emphasis on food intake; snacks; small, frequent meals; appetite stimulants; oral nutritional supplements and more. After some investigation Extendicare Holyrood began examining the idea of dispensing a small amount of supplement with a routine medication pass.

A previous study, (Kerrigan, Maxwell, & Siegei, 1996), revealed that a nutrient-dense supplement, providing a 2 calorie/mL, provided as a medication pass program may have a greater effect on resident weight gain than the traditional 1.06 calories/mL supplement provided with or between meals. Through a formally structured internal, approval process and informed consent, Extendicare Holyrood went to work to pilot and evaluate the effects of the MPNSP on residents' body weight, skin integrity, and overall and nutritional status.

Resident adherence and staff perception throughout the study was assessed and it was determined that residents had an excellent adherence rating at 96%. Staff perception was positive and it was noted that an increase in workload of 5 to 20 minutes was necessary depending on the feeding needs and requirements of the residents. Communication was a key factor in the pilot program and included a successful interdisciplinary approach.

The study noted that MPNSP was associated with:

- Maintenance or increase in body weight
- Improved skin integrity
- Visceral protein status

The researchers indicate that the combination of the current literature and positive results from the pilot program suggest that a MPNSP could help improve the nutritional status of long term care residents who are at high nutritional risk, thereby resulting in improved quality of life.

For more information about the study contact Lorie Little, Administrator of Extendicare, Holyrood at LLittle@extendicare.com The full article can be purchased through The Journal of Gerontological Nursing at <http://www.jognonline.com/view.asp?rID=28125>

Doll-Shankaruk M, Yau W, Oelke C. Implementation and effects of a medication pass nutritional supplement program in a long-term care facility: a pilot study. Journal of Gerontological Nursing [serial online]. May 2008;34(5):45-51. Available from: CINAHL, Ipswich, MA. Accessed February 18, 2009.