

**127** **LOW FOOD INTAKE IN OLDER PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA**

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**Aim** The aim of the study was to investigate the risk factors associated with older people in acute care setting for developing low food intake.

**Background** Eating difficulties among patients with dementia have been identified in Western countries and they progress when dementia advances. Previous studies have indicated that low food intake and weight loss is not a result of people with dementia not willing to eat independently.

**Design** The study consisted of nurses observing meal time observations. Observation was done for 3 days during lunch and dinner time.

**Methods** 17 participants were selected from patients with dementia from 2 geriatric units in an acute care hospital. Data was collected using the Barthel index, Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE) and Edinburgh Feeding Evaluation in Dementia (EdFED)

**Results** The prevalence of low food intake at meals in patients with dementia in the acute care unit was about 10%. Eating difficulty, no feeding assistance, moderate dependence, few family visits, being female and older were six independent factors associated with low food intake.

**Conclusion** Nurses needed to assess the patients feeding ability to continue to self feed. To supervise the feeding of the patients with moderate dependency and appropriate verbal or physical assistance at meal times is recommended.

Relevance to clinical practice: Strategies to encourage families to visit their older relatives in acute care units is encouraged and recommended.