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Development of a Dysphagia Management Protocol for Older Residents in a Care Home Setting

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to develop a co-designed dysphagia management protocol for older residents living in a care home setting.

Method: A qualitative study is being conducted within four care homes in a region in the North of England; these were purposively selected to ensure representation of a range of care models across the care home sector. A literature search was conducted to establish good practice in the management of dysphagia in care homes. The findings from the literature review informed the development of semi-structured interview/focus group guides. Eight focus groups have been conducted with 40 members of the nursing and care assistant team and semi-structured interviews conducted with four nursing home managers. These have explored the assessment and management of dysphagia and the barriers and opportunities for improvement in dysphagia management. Interviews will also be conducted with residents (n=16) and nominated relatives, and quality managers (n=4). The interview and focus group data are being analyzed using the Framework Approach.

Results: The literature review and preliminary data analysis suggest the following emerging themes: Lack of integrated approaches to education and training; Enablers and barriers to effective dysphagia management; Impact of relationship with other health care professionals on dysphagia management.

Conclusion: These findings will lead to the co-design of a protocol for optimizing nutrition and hydration which is based on evidence and best practice principles and which can be adopted in the care home setting. This protocol will be produced by January 2018. The study has been funded by the Abbeyfield Foundation.

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