

Title: Healthcare professionals' perceptions of flavoured foam with adults with severe dysphagia; an exploratory study.

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# **Healthcare professionals' perceptions of flavoured foam with adults with severe dysphagia; an exploratory study.**

## **Introduction**

Dysphagia impacts negatively on quality of life, and is strongly associated with social isolation and depression (Vesey, 2013).

Management of severe dysphagia is often limited to significant or complete restriction with eating and drinking, with full dependency on enteral feeding for nutrition. Offering small amounts of flavoured foam is an intervention aimed at improving patient experience through taste. This has been used in Europe, with some also adopting this practice within the UK. Currently, there is limited research to guide clinical practice in offering flavoured foam. Little is understood about the perceptions and experiences of healthcare professionals of the introduction of this intervention.

## **Aims**

This preliminary study explores perceptions and experiences of healthcare professionals (HCPs) with offering flavoured foam for patients with severe dysphagia.

## **Methods**

This preliminary qualitative study explores HCPs perceptions and experiences using semi-structured interviews. HCPs were eligible to participate if they worked with adult patients with severe dysphagia of any aetiology. An invitation letter was sent to a regional clinical dysphagia discussion group to recruit participants. Participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form. An interview topic guide was developed from available literature and discussion with an SLT. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and anonymised. Data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke (2006)).

## **Results**

Eleven participants were approached, and ten agreed to participate; 9 SLT's and 1 dietician. Participants worked in a range of clinical areas and had 4-30 years of dysphagia experience. Emerging themes include barriers impacting implementation and perceived impact on patients and their families. Analysis is ongoing, due to complete June 2020.

## **Conclusions**

Preliminary conclusions indicate that HCPs are interested in using flavoured foam with patients with severe dysphagia. However, current use and perceptions vary. Barriers have been identified impacting implementation. Further research, particularly exploring patient experience is indicated.