

What is good mealtime care for people with dementia living in care homes?

An ethnographic study

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INTRO

- It is important that care home staff have the necessary skills and support to provide good care at mealtimes for people with dementia.
- This study uses ethnographic methods to identify principles of good mealtime care for this population.

METHODS

- Mealtime observations and semi-structured interviews in two UK care homes.
- Data analyzed using constant comparative method, so that data from early interviews were explored in more depth subsequently.

RESULTS

- Preliminary analysis has identified several key principles of good mealtime care for people with dementia living in care homes, including: Setting the right tone; Working well as a team; Knowing the residents; Promoting autonomy and independence; Gently persevering.

DISCUSSION

- Results will inform the development of a staff training intervention to optimise mealtime care for this population.
- It is anticipated that better mealtime care will improve health and quality of life for residents, and reduce hospital admissions.

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Good mealtime care for people with dementia in care homes includes Setting the right tone, Working well as a team, Knowing the residents, Promoting autonomy and independence, and Gently persevering.



CARE HOME 1

- 35 beds approx.
- National company
- Registered for dementia care

CARE HOME 2

- 90 beds approx.
- Local company
- Registered for dementia care

THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Setting the right tone

Informality
Etiquette and presentation
Staff eating with residents
Facilitating interaction

Working well as a team

Co-ordinating efficiently
Communicating about residents
Thoughtful family involvement
Consulting experts

Knowing the residents

Understanding variability
Continuity of care
Relating to the residents
Understanding resident dynamics

Promoting autonomy and independence

Enabling choice
Assisting appropriately
Reconciling the complexities

Gently persevering

Problem-solving
Providing opportunity
Encouragement, not force
Being pragmatic

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