

Response to Letter to the editor by Frode Slinde and Ulla Svantesson

Ingrid Poulsen, Ingalill Rahm Hallberg, Helle Vendel Petersen and Marianne Schroll

Dear Colleagues

Thanks for the interest in our article: Lack of nutritional and functional effects of nutritional supervision by nurses: a quasi-experimental study in geriatric patients (1).

We agree with Frode Slinde and Ulla Svantesson that nutritional care is an interdisciplinary task. As we have described in the article, the geriatric context where the study was performed, had a highly interdisciplinary approach as we have described in another article (2). Both the intervention and the control unit used physiotherapists as part of the team. All team members used validated instruments for quality control, one of which was Barthel index. We find, that a test assessing functionality and independence of help from other persons, as Barthel Index does, also expresses quality of life. The nurses in our study were the staff group responsible for the care 24 hours around the clock, and thus very relevant to involve in the intervention. The dieticians were only available as experts when the patients needed specific diets. Whether or not the results had been different if we had used dieticians and physiotherapists as part of the specific intervention is, as Slinde and Svantesson points out,

impossible to say. What we have done in our study is to examine what we could achieve when only one staff group was involved in the intervention superimposed on the interdisciplinary geriatric teamwork. We could not find any differences between the groups, however there could be numerous reasons other than the composition of the interdisciplinary team that could be responsible for that, for instance, that our patients on average had a good nutritional status.

References

1. Poulsen I, Vendel Petersen H, Rahm Hallberg I, Schroll M. Lack of nutritional and functional effects of nutritional supervision by nurses: a quasi-experimental study in geriatric patients. *Scand J Food Nutr* 2007; 51: 6–12.
2. Poulsen I, Hesselbo B, Pietersen I, Schroll. Implementation of functional assessment scales in geriatric practice: a feasibility study. *Scand J Public Health* 2005; 33(4): 292–9.

Ingrid Poulsen

Department of Neurorehabilitation
Hvidovre University Hospital
Kettegaards Alle 30
DK-2650 Hvidovre
E-mail: ingrid.poulsen@hv.regionh.dk