



Puréed diets provide fewer nutrients than regular diets

Durant, M. (2008). A comparison of Energy Provision by Diet Order in a Long-Term Care Facility. *Canadian Journal on Aging* 27, (2), 225 – 227

Why are puréed diets associated with undernutrition?

Involuntary weight loss (IWL) is a common problem in nursing home residents. It can threaten health and function and is associated with increased risk for infection and depression. To help avoid this problem, changes in the composition of residents' diets are usually prescribed. Many older adults in longterm care facilities (LTCF) require puréed food. Consumption of these diets is associated with undernutrition. The quality of these diets may lead to low intake of energy and protein, either due to inadequate intake overall or inadequate nutrient density of these products. This study looked at the nutritional content of these products as planned and provided to determine if they were sufficient in energy and macronutrients.

What was done?

A single cycle of a 5-week menu in a 70-bed rural LTCF in Nova Scotia was studied. The Food Processor SQL software package was used to estimate the energy content (kcal/day) in the foods. Analysis was done only on the food provided on the meal trays (additional nutritional supplements were not included) to determine mean total energy and macronutrients provided.

What was found?

The regular diet contained a mean of 2,120 (\pm 222) kcal/day while the puréed diet contained only 1,666 (\pm 78) kcal/day. The mean levels of all three macronutrients were lower in the puréed diets. The regular diet contained approximately 7 g more protein than the puréed diet (74 g compared to 67 g), 65 g more carbohydrate (320 g compared to 255 g) and 20 g more fat (64 g compared to 43 g).

Importance of this Research:

Involuntary weight loss is a significant problem in LTCF. The difference in energy and macronutrient levels found between regular diets and puréed diets can have a considerable impact on LTCF residents who may require greater than average energy intake due to other comorbidities.

Applying what was found

This study suggests that LTCF menus that solely follow the Canada's Food Guide may result in malnutrition for residents that were prescribed a puréed diet order. Dietitians should be aware of this problem and carefully plan diets that meet requirements and monitor the nutrient intakes and nutritional status of all residents in LTCF.

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