

Engaging hospitalised patients in their nutrition care using technology: development of the NUTRI-TEC intervention

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Background

Nutrition is vital for health and recovery, yet most patients fail to meet dietary requirements and up to 50% are malnourished in hospital. When patients participate in nutrition care, dietary intakes improve. Advances in health information technology (HIT) have broadened the ways by which patients can participate in care.

Objectives

To develop a patient-centred, HIT intervention (NUTRI-TEC) aiming to engage patients in nutrition care during hospitalisation.

Method

Intervention development was underpinned by theoretical frameworks and concepts (HIT theory, integrated knowledge translation, patient participation), existing evidence and a rigorous program of research (realist review, usability testing, patient/staff interviews, feasibility study). A multidisciplinary research team and key stakeholders (health consumers, health professionals, industry partners) co-developed NUTRI-TEC. An iterative development-evaluation cycle was used and the intervention was regularly tested with hospital patients and staff.

Results

Findings from each study phase informed the intervention, which involves: 1) Patient education and training; and 2) Active participation in nutrition care. The first component includes education on meeting energy/protein requirements in hospital; and training on how to use the NUTRI-TEC program (accessed via bedside computers). The second component involves patients using the program to record their food intake after each meal and track their nutrition intake relative to their individual goals. This is supported with daily goal-setting sessions with a dietitian.

Conclusions (if applicable)

NUTRI-TEC was iteratively designed using theory, data and stakeholder input, to enable patient participation in their nutrition care. This has the potential to improve dietary intakes in hospital.