

Improving Mealtime Experiences for Frail Nursing Home Residents with Duchesse, a Tasty Alternative to Regular Pureed Diets: A Pilot Study

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Originally Presented at UKSRG-2018 Conference held at Institute of Child Health, London, UK during February 1-2, 2018.

Abstract

Purpose: Texture-modified diets often have a negative impact on mealtime experiences. People on a dysphagia pureed diet and their caregivers complain about visual presentation, flavor and grainy meat substances. Duchesse was developed as a substitute for regular pureed diets and currently exists of 9 smooth and homogenous meals, including pasta, rice and fish. The purpose of this study was to test Duchesse in a frail and challenged nursing home population. Pureed diets are frequently advised for dysphagic residents with cognitive and communicative restrictions due to dementia and/or stroke.

Method: Two explorative studies were conducted: 1) 10 nursing home residents with dysphagia and limited abilities tried Duchesse for 1 week. Experiences of the residents and staff were observed through qualitative reports, questionnaires and tasting sessions, and 2) another study followed 24 more dysphagic patients. There were 5 observations of the regular pureed diet and 15 observations of Duchesse. Since the majority of the residents were not able to give (adequate) feedback, the mealtime-duration, food-intake and waste was registered together with proxy reports and information from medical records.

Results: There were no major changes in duration and intake, but there was significantly less waste (7% vs. 20%; $p < 0.05$). The 5 verbally fluent residents and the proxies all expressed a strong preference for Duchesse, since it was tastier and easier to process.

Conclusion: Preliminary data suggest that Duchesse is a tasty alternative to regular pureed diets and has no negative effects. Future studies will investigate the long-term impact on nutritional status and well-being in different populations.

Citation: Lemmens J, Joussem AS, Kreutz R, Ubben S. Improving Mealtime Experiences for Frail Nursing Home Residents with Duchesse, a Tasty Alternative to Regular Pureed Diets: A Pilot Study. Proceedings of UKSRG-2018; 2018 Feb 1-2; London, UK. J Oral Health Dent. 2018;1(S2):A018.