

The challenges facing residential aged care homes to participate in quality food and nutrition research

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Study

Providing meals in residential aged care is a complex task and the needs of residents has become increasingly more complex over the past decades. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety reported in 2021 and highlighted a range of continuing issues related to food and nutrition, including:

- The failure to manage the rate of malnutrition.
- The requirement for increased choices.
- The need for person-centred approaches.
- Major issues with staffing and skills.

There is a need for research to find solutions to these ongoing issues in residential aged care, but it can be challenging for residential aged care homes to participate in research. A secondary analysis of qualitative data gathered as part of a collection of three studies was undertaken to identify systematic challenges for residential aged care homes in Australia to participate in quality food and nutrition research.

What was found

Several challenges facing residential aged care homes to participate in food and nutrition research were identified, including:

- Complex staffing issues deter or impede participation in research.
- External pressure on the aged care system leads to research not being a priority.
- Funding issues are variable and pose a barrier for some aged care homes.
- Research processes and requirements can lead to biased samples.

Practical Applications

- Issues within foodservices are system issues and there is a need for quality food and nutrition research to determine the solutions.
- Research should be part of usual business in residential aged care.

How to reference journal article

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