

Transferring malnutrition knowledge to older citizens, their healthcare professionals and informal carers; a next step forward in the treatment of malnutrition



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Description of the initiative

One out of 10 community-dwelling older adults in the Netherlands is malnourished. Prevalence of (risk of) malnutrition increases with age and care dependency. Various studies show that a large group of older adults, (informal) carers and primary care professionals are insufficiently aware of and have little knowledge of the health risks of malnutrition, the importance of maintaining a healthy diet and combatting unintentional weight loss..

In 2017 the **Eat well - Age well** intervention-program was developed by the Dutch Malnutrition Steering Group (DMSG) to increase awareness of the consequences of (risk of) malnutrition, and to increase recognition and prevention of (risk of) malnutrition among older citizens, their informal carers and their care providers.

This intervention was developed in co-creation with older adults and consists of three elements: 1. a website with self-management tests (17.000 visitors each year) 2. group meetings for older citizens and informal carers and 3. training for primary care professionals. A pool of 100 primary care dietitians has been trained to carry out the intervention program in their region. The intervention has been accredited by the National Institute for Health and Environment (RIVM).

The goal of this project is

To evaluate the effect and the process of the Eat well - Age well intervention-program among older citizens, their informal carers and their care providers to improve the intervention and to implement the optimized intervention (inter)nationally.

Planned activities & deliverables

1. Measuring the effects of attending group meetings for senior citizens and their carers on knowledge about risk factors, prevention and treatment of malnutrition **2. Measuring the effects of attending the training for primary care professionals** on increasing their knowledge of different aspects of malnutrition, and interdisciplinary collaboration. **3. Adjusting** the group meeting and the training for primary care professionals according to results obtained from activities 1 and 2. **4. Implementing the optimized intervention (inter)nationally** in the accredited elements **Eat well - Age well intervention-program**. **5. Sharing the results, experience and learnings (inter)nationally.**

Step 1 Time period months 1 to 6 Adjust questionnaires for process and effect evaluation for all target groups.

Select primary care dietitians that has been trained to carry out the intervention program in their region and involved regional senior citizen's associations for cooperation and planning of approximately 20 group meetings for older citizens and informal carers and 15 training sessions for primary care professionals.

Step 2 Time period months 7 to 12 Hold group meetings and training sessions in various regions in the Netherlands. Measure the effects of the group meetings, by measuring (changes in) knowledge, before and after 4 weeks of the group meetings for older adults and the training sessions for care professionals. We intend to include 250 older adults and informal carers and 250 primary HCP.

Step 3. Time period months 10 to 14 Analyze results and adapt the interventions accordingly

Step 4. Time period months 15 tot 18 Implement the optimized group meetings and training sessions for use across the country.

Publish results on the website of the accrediting organization (RIVM). Sharing the results, experience and learnings (inter)nationally; as dissemination of ESPEN journals; include experiences in the LLL courses and in www.fightmalnutrition.eu

Resources & enablers

€ 30.000 in total incl VAT: € 19.000 project management and back-office, € 5.140 fee trainers, € 4.650 location costs. € 1.210 PR and teaching materials. A project manager will be appointed for 0,1 fte (€17.400 euro incl. VAT) A senior projectleader (1 hours a month (1600 incl VAT) and the advisory board with members of DMSG will support the project manager and will be offered back-office support by the DMSG- office (contribution DMSG) Selected dietitians receives a fee of € 100 for each group-meeting (20 x € 100 excl VAT) and € 150 for each training session (15 x € 150 excl VAT).

Results/outcomes & expected impact

At the moment, the intervention program is accredited by the National Institute for Health and Environment (RIVM) as well-founded (according to the RIVM guidelines). With the evaluation as proposed in this project, we will apply for upgrading of the intervention to the next level of evidence (showing first signs of effectiveness). Within the DMSG, relevant professional disciplines are represented, like representatives from the Dutch Dietetic Association, senior citizen's association, universities. These partners will be involved in disseminating results of the project to their members and stakeholders.

With this project the next steps forward in the treatment of malnutrition with shared responsibilities for the elderly themselves will be reached (inter)national.

The DMSG has a lot of experience in implementing results from a project. In addition, the DMSG has a website for health care professionals and a website for older adults and their informal carers, both sites with a large numbers of visitors.

The current intervention has already been accredited by the National Institute for Health and Environment (RIVM). We therefore believe that we have all expertise available that is necessary to carry out this accredited project to the next steps forwards in the treatment of malnutrition and share the results internationally.

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