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The Detection and Prevention of Weight Loss Attributed to COVID-19 Social Restrictions Within Long-Term Care Residents

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The Detection and Prevention of Weight Loss Attributed to COVID-19 Social Restrictions Within Long-Term Care Residents

Capstone Completed by: Grace Gohman, Alexander Lucken & Caitlin Williams
Who We Are

We are a group of senior nursing students dedicated to bettering the health of the geriatric population of Central Minnesota in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic.
Impact of COVID-19
Analyzing the full extent of COVID-19 within a long-term-care setting

Geriatric Health
Understanding how future nurses can better serve the geriatric population

Quality Improvement
Providing the utmost service for quality improvement of a facility

What We Work Towards
Long-Term Care & COVID-19 Restrictions

How COVID-19 has presented a new phenomena within the LTC setting
Visualization

Close your eyes, imagine you are a resident living at a long-term care facility. The day is March 13, 2020.
Now

A year after COVID-19 restrictions were put into place, LTC residents are still faced with holistic health consequences of these orders.
Moving Forward

How can we best manage the social isolation and unintentional weight loss within this specific setting?
Our Project
Implementing change to promote nutritional health of the geriatric population
The Process

**Complexity**
Understanding the complexity of COVID-19 and its widespread effects

**Weighing the options**
There are a vast amount of hardships, which would we choose?

**Feasibility**
How can we best implement an intervention in a short amount of time?

**Research**
Are there facts that back up our claims?

**Method**
How would we assess and measure the success of our intervention

**Result**
Utilizing our resources to promote the best end-result
COVID-19’s Disproportionate Impact on Older Adults
According to the Global Coalition of Aging, 2020

- **Europe**
  - **In April 2020**: 95% of COVID-19 deaths were in people >60 years old.
  - **In 2020**: 50% of all deaths were in people >80 years old.

- **USA**
  - **In 2020**: 80% of COVID-19 deaths were in people >65 years old.
Immediate Restrictions Implemented Nationwide

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services released LTC facility restrictions effective immediately:

- Restricting all visitors & volunteers
- Cancelling all group activities
- Cancelling all communal dining
- Implementing daily active screenings
A Day in the Life of LTC Residents in Quarantine

- Bound room
- Only contact with a fully gowned nurse
- Social deprivation
- Only means to communicate with loved ones through windows, foreign technology

Altarum; Special Report October 2020
“The rate of death following a COVID-19 infection is 8,200 times higher in adults aged 85 years or older.”

“With 43 percent of adults age 60-plus in the U.S. reporting feeling lonely, the rates of social isolation and loneliness were already at the level of “a public health crisis,”

Seniors state eating together, whether at home or outside the home, is a positive activity. They experience less loneliness and recognize that they eat more when in the company of other people.

by The CDC

by the AARP

by Journal of Population Ageing
Early Detection & Prevention

1. Aiding in the early detection of sarcopenia
2. Preventing further weight loss in high-risk residents

Education of Staff

1. Emphasizing the role staff hold
2. Providing feasible interventions
**Process**

**DATA COLLECTION**
- Monitoring & assessing the negative impact COVID-19 restrictions present to LTC residents
- Depression
- Loneliness
- Anxiety
- Weight Loss

**PHASE 1**
**INITIAL TOPIC CHOICE**
- Socialization
- Initial focus on how to better implement socialization methods within the facility

**PHASE 2**
**FOCUS SHIFT**
- Nutritional Detriments
- Importance of Residential Snack Time

**PHASE 3**
**BRAINSTORMING**
- Staff Education
- Nutritionist Consult
- Weight Charting Importance
- Meal Time Data Collection

**Depression**
**Loneliness**
**Anxiety**
**Weight Loss**
Residents were proven to have experienced a 7% or greater weight loss in a 16 month period.
Timeline of Data

Pre-COVID
Communal dining, activities & visitors allowed

January 2020

3 Months In
Specific residents begin to lose weight

June 2020

9 Months In
The most dramatic decline in resident weight. Why?

December 2020

Present Day
Continuous decline, student interventions implemented

April 2021
Increasing weight in high-risk residents

GOAL
Experienced weight loss after restrictions were put in place

LTC Residents
90% of our selected, high-risk residents faced an unspecified weight loss of more than 7% of their body weight between January 2020 & April 2021

RESULTS

POSSIBLE CAUSES
Depressive symptoms stemming from isolation restrictions and lack of socialization

COVID-19 Isolation Restrictions
10 selected resident's weights monitored

16 MONTHS Experimentation time

GOAL
Increasing weight in high-risk residents
Individual Numerical Data
Residential Weight Loss

Grouped Data
Potential Solutions

- Use of essential oils; peppermint, fish oils
- Communal events such as ice cream socials
- Dining room renovation
- Snacks; education and reinforcement
SNACKS
Implementation

Signage

Snack Carts

Why is the snack basket important?

Healthy snacking stimulates appetite in the residents.

Helps to stabilize blood sugars for those that need to maintain a good level and maintains energy levels throughout the day.

Snacks can decrease the residents hunger and keep them from overeating at meal times.

Socialization with other residents and staff members increases appetite and makes meal times more enjoyable. It leads to more regular eating and consumption of higher-quality meals.

Socialization also reduces the level of depression and anxiety caused from isolation and loneliness. This is especially prominent during the past year and visitor restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Socialization helps the residents maintain their self-esteem and sense of worth.

In the dining rooms the residents typically gets the food faster and warmer. Plus it’s more fun.

Encouraging the use of the dining rooms for meal times is important!
Limitations

Consistency
Weights are not taken weekly

Time
Four-Week time period

Resources
Regulation of staff implementation over time
**Conclusion**

**Staff Readiness**
Staff were receptive and excited for the change.

**Resident Excitement**
Residents were eager for change and seemed ready to eat.

**Commitment to succeed**
LTC facility's dedication to resident health.
What can you do to help a loved one?

Know the Signs
- Loss of interest in socializing or hobbies - isolation
- Fatigue
- Loss of ability to perform activities of daily living
- Worsening of mood and/or cognitive disorders
- Sudden, constipation

What to do
- Reach out & stay connected
- Encourage movement
- Aid in creating scheduled meal times
- Increase flavor & fiber
- Embrace finger foods
- Encourage healthy snacking
Final Takeaway

Continue to offer love and support to your elderly loved ones throughout the duration of COVID-19 and further into the future.
Thank You

Thank you for attending our final CSB/SJU Nursing project!

Please feel free to offer us your questions, comments or feedback!

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