

Title: Silver Spoon: The Role of Assisted Feeding in Hospitalized Patients with Delirium

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Objective: Published evidence suggests 32% of hospitalized patients eat only ¼ of meals or less. Furthermore, 30-50% of inpatients meet malnutrition criteria. Patients with Delirium are at higher risk due to inability to independently order preferred meals, require higher nursing demand to be fed, and demonstrate decreased communication to hunger and/or thirst cues. The purpose of this study is to improve nutrition and hydration status in patients at risk for, or diagnosed with, Delirium through a volunteer-based assisted feeding called the Silver Spoon Program.

Design: Descriptive Cohort Study

Methods and Instruments: Fourteen volunteers were trained on an evidence-based, validated feeding procedure to assist in feeding patients and recognize hazards in this population. Data was collected on estimated percent consumption of meals and beverages, patient preferences, and impact on nursing staff time saved otherwise used to feed patients. Data was analyzed using Excel software.

Results: Sixty feeding episodes (n=49 patients) were recorded from October 2017 – March 2019. An estimated 50% of meals, 72% of beverages, and 356 kcals were consumed during an average of 26 minutes per feeding session by a volunteer. In a subset sample of 25 patients, estimated intake of 8.2 oz of fluid was consumed per meal via Silver Spoon Volunteer assistance.

Conclusions: Utilization of the Silver Spoon volunteer-based assistance feeding program has a positive impact on nutrition and hydration status in hospitalized patients with delirium compared to historical data findings. This program also impacted nursing staff time by saving 26 minutes per meal.

Conflicts of Interest: None

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