

Multi-disciplinary Approach to Hospital Nutrition Essential **BAPEN response to the launch of *Improving Nutritional Care-Joint Action Plan*** Date of Issue: Wednesday 31st October 2007

The Nutrition Action Plan must be welcomed as a constructive approach to encouraging a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach to hospital nutrition. Getting the nutrition right for patients in hospital is a bit like getting the fitness levels of a sports team up to scratch – its the sort of thing that can turn the results of a hospital from ordinary to excellent, from loser to winner.

Up to now, there has rightly been emphasis on the basics – better hospital food, protected mealtimes, screening, dignity – all hugely important and to be welcomed and warmly supported. Research tells us that patients coming into hospital already malnourished are twice as likely to die. However, for some of the most dangerously ill patients in hospital, food is not enough – they may need specialist feeding through tubes placed in the stomach or into the veins..

Appropriate nutritional treatment for both these groups – the dangerously ill and the already malnourished - can, therefore, be lifesaving and thus hugely influence hospital results as well as people's lives.

Multi-professional teams of doctors, dietitians, specialist nurses, pharmacists, and caterers, where this team approach has been adopted, have had a big impact on delivering artificial feeding and food appropriately, safely and effectively. Hospitals need to develop a culture of nutritional awareness and to develop management structures which co-ordinate appropriate nutritional care for patients - whether simple in the majority, or more complex in a minority - so that excellent nutritional management is fostered by all.

The new web-based resource *Organisation of Food and Nutritional Support* (OFNoSH) available from today free through the BAPEN website <http://www.bapen.org.uk/> is designed to help hospital management think in detail about such comprehensive organisation.

The aim? To ensure that every patient, in every specialist unit, is screened nutritionally, and every patient, whether they can eat or not and however ill they are, has a nutritional care-plan appropriate to their needs.

BAPEN's OFNoSH supports the Nutrition Action Plan (www.bapen.org.uk) is in line with the Council of Europe UK Alliance's 10 Key Characteristics of Good Nutritional Care in Hospitals (www.bapen.org.uk/pdfs/coe_leaflet.pdf) and supports implementation of the NICE Guidelines on Nutrition Support in Adults issued in 2006 (<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG32>).

Jeremy Powell-Tuck, BAPEN Council & BAPEN Medical
Professor of Clinical Nutrition, Barts and the London.
Professor Powell-Tuck is Co-Chair of the BAPEN Group which developed and produced OFNoSH.

Further media information from Rhonda Smith rhonda@minervaprc.com 01264-710428 / 07887-714957