

# TAILORED NUTRITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR HOME-DWELLING ALZHEIMER FAMILIES: THE FEASIBILITY AND ELEMENTS PROMOTING POSITIVE CHANGES IN DIET (NuAD-trial)

Puranen TM, Pitkälä KH, Suominen MH

Department of General Practice and Primary Health Care, University of Helsinki

## Introduction

Nutrition is a key component in maintaining health and function in persons with Alzheimer disease (AD) and their spousal caregivers. The aim of this study is to describe the process, feasibility and challenges of our intervention exploring the effectiveness of tailored nutritional guidance on AD families.

## Subjects and Methods

This study comprised 40 persons with AD and spousal caregivers. One-year intervention involved tailored nutritional guidance. We analyzed the nutritionist's field notes and the participant feedback questionnaires with thematic content analysis with grounded theory approach.

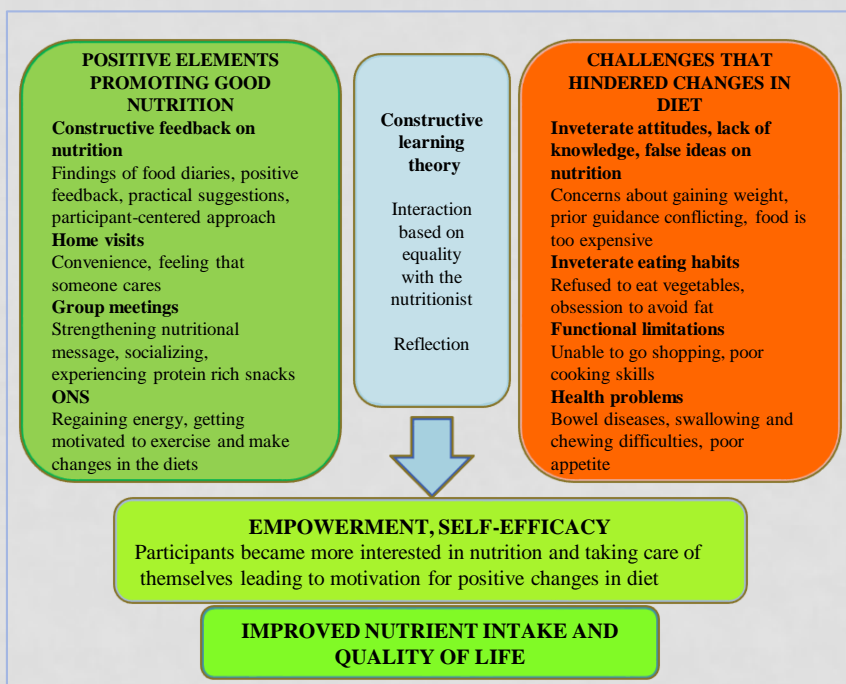
MAIN ELEMENTS OF INTERVENTION	MEANS TO IMPLEMENT INTERVENTION
Tailored guidance on weight or unintentional weight loss	Home visits Group meetings (1-2 times)
Sufficient energy, protein and other nutrient intake	Tailored nutritional care plan, NCP
Vitamin D supplementation	Personal discussions
Use of oral nutritional supplements (ONS)	Booklet of good nutrition for older adults
Exercise	Brochures about sources of protein, calcium and vitamin D
Housekeeping and cooking	ONS when needed

Table. The contents of intervention.

## Results

We identified several positive elements promoting better nutrition: constructive feedback to families, home visits, group meetings, the oral nutritional supplements (ONS). Challenges that hindered making changes in diets included participants' inveterate attitudes and eating habits, health problems and functional limitations (**Figure**).

The positive feedback from participants indicated the feasibility of our tailored nutritional guidance.



## Conclusions

Assessment-based, tailored nutritional guidance that uses a personal, positive approach and learner-centred adult education may empower AD families to make positive changes in their diets, and thus lead them to improved nutrition and quality of life.

Correspondence: [taija.puranen@helsinki.fi](mailto:taija.puranen@helsinki.fi)

Figure. Key elements of the intervention that promoted improved nutrition, and challenges that hindered nutritional changes.