

Primary Food Care: A Corner Stone in Optimal Care for adult Cancer Outpatients Living in the Three Rivers FoodDelta, an EU Reference Site.

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Equitable access to Primary Food Care*[1] as an integral part of integrated transmural care for all cancer patients is a key condition to reduce complications and comorbidity, maintaining optimal health and quality of life. Currently, most chemotherapy is performed on an outpatient basis and patients suffer from chemotherapy-induced dysgeusia while living at home. As such, they develop problematic food intake causing high risk for malnutrition, poor quality of life and a less favorable treatment outcome. In addition, very limited evidence-based practice guidelines exist for the pharmacological or culinary management of dysgeusia and decreased food intake in cancer outpatients. Suggestions from best practices, though useful, do not accurately resolve this stressful situation for the cancer outpatients involved. Primary Food Care should therefore become an integral part of European and national guidelines and policies for high-quality cancer care.

Primary Food Care is a relatively new concept in healthcare [1] requiring a wide range of stakeholders to be involved and managed. The aim of the Three Rivers FoodDelta (TRFD), an EU approved reference site, is to create and implement a jointly supported policy for Primary Food Care, in particular the gastrological approach to problematic food intake due to various causes, including normal aging, diseases and/or medical treatments. Such policy reflects the common vision developed by the former European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Aging (EIP-AHA) Food and Nutrition Action Group, currently working under the umbrella of the Reference Site Collaborative Network (RSCN), and in the framework of the lifecourse approach to active and healthy aging. By having science, technology, gastro-engineering and policy go hand in hand the TRFD can implement cost-effective and efficient measures in primary healthcare that benefit the lives of many European citizens.

Patients and their family caregivers are at the center of Primary Food Care. In the case of cancer outpatients, this means the provision of extensive and user friendly ICT-based support for self-care in terms of purchasing ingredients and preparing personalized, tasty and healthy meals and bread at home. It all starts with a cancer outpatient reporting dysgeusia to a member of the multi-professional cancer team. This is the trigger to refer this patient for a one-off consultation to a chef-gastro-engineering in a nearby accredited taste center** or, if available, in a satellite service at the own cancer center. A consultation includes an O-Box assessment [2] and a comprehensive history of food allergies, taste preferences, prescribed diets as well as preferred local stores for purchasing food ingredients. Based on the individual taste profile (O-Box assessment), personalized recipes are offered to the patient online within 48 hours, with additional information regarding the availability of the needed ingredients in the local stores. The personalized recipes include a detailed description of the required amounts of each ingredient and how these meals should be prepared at home. If problems or uncertainties arise during the preparation of a specific personalized recipe, the patient or caregiver can be assisted online by a suitably trained chef. This gastrological approach has been proven effective and feasible, with adult cancer outpatients reporting improved palatability of bread, meaningful positive feelings and a better empowerment to participate in their treatment [2,3]. Therefore, TRFD will scale up its research and implementation of personalized taste steering for cancer outpatients suffering taste disturbances due to chemotherapy. From Q1 2022, several cancer centers in Belgium and the Netherlands will join forces to offer this gastrological approach to their adult outpatients.

If you want to know more about the gastrological approach to taste disorders caused by chemotherapy, watch this short movie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOpjZ2e3ITQ>



NOTES

***Primary Food Care** is all about non-clinical food, meaning the consequent and appropriate use of fresh ingredients to prepare tasty, healthy meals and, if appropriate, “personalized” meals based on an O-Box assessment.

****Accredited** stands for quality guarantee: an accredited taste center is headed by a **Chef Gastro-engineering** (CGE). CGE is a professional training course that has been organised for more than 10 years by the Centre for Research and Innovation in Gastrology & Primary Food Care (CRIG), in cooperation with Odisee University of Applied Sciences (Belgium). All accredited taste centers are online connected to a multi-professional backing team of CRIG. In this way, each center guarantees the quality of the personalized recipes it delivers to an individual cancer outpatient.

REFERENCES

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