

# Hospital food service and dietary intake

## A comparative analysis of a cook-serve buffet trolley food system and a cook chill pre-plated food system

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### Introduction

Insufficient dietary intake is common among hospitalised patients and may affect prognosis negatively (1, 2). Hence hospital meals are central in the treatment, and their efficacy in ensuring adequate intake is crucial. This study aimed to compare patients' dietary intake from a cook-serve buffet-trolley serving system (BTS) to a new cook-chill pre-plated concept (CCP) allowing patients to choose from a static menu 24/7.

### Results

An energy intake  $\geq 75\%$  of requirements was achieved in 74 % of patients on CCP compared to 58 % on BTS ( $p=0,116$ ) and a protein intake  $\geq 75\%$  of requirements was achieved in 55 % of the patients on CCP compared to 53 % on BTS ( $p=0,801$ ). An energy intake  $\geq 75\%$  of requirements was achieved in 67 % of the patients at nutritional risk on CCP compared to 33 % on BTS ( $p=0,130$ ) and 58 % reached  $\geq 75\%$  of the protein requirements on CCP compared to 33 % on BTS ( $p=0,256$ ).

### Conclusion

The results do not show a significant increase in energy and protein intake among all patients or patients at nutritional risk. In future research on foodservice concepts at hospitals, there is a need for exploring dietary intake among patients at ward level and there is a need for focusing on patients at nutritional risk. Furthermore, there is a need for studying organisational and communicational aspects when implementing a new food-service concept.



Figure 1. Picture of the buffet-trolley serving system (BTS).

### Methods

A quasi-experimental study was conducted at an orthopaedic surgical and a gynaecological surgical ward at a Danish Hospital. 57 patients (expected admittance  $\geq 3$  days) were served meals from BTS and the dietary intake was measured. After implementation of CCP on the wards, dietary intake was measured on 38 patients. Intake at mealtimes was assessed through a visual portion size assessment method and intake in-between meals was measured using a self-reported dietary record (4). The number of patients achieving an intake of  $\geq 75\%$  of energy and protein requirements was compared between groups using a pooled two-proportion z-test (5).



Figure 2: Picture of the new cook-chill preplated concept (CCP).

Table 1. Number of patients and measurements included before and after the implementation of CCP on the wards.

	Original concept Buffet trolley system (BTS)	New diet concept Pre plated concept (CCP)
<b>Number of patients</b>	57	38
<b>Number of measurements</b>	114	44
<b>Gender</b>		
· Women	49,1 %	47,4 %
· Men	50,9 %	52,6 %
<b>Distribution of patients at wards</b>		
· Orthopedic surgical ward(09-4)	29,8 %	26,3 %
· Orthopedic surgical ward(12-4)	38,6 %	39,5 %
· Gynecological ward(12-5)	31,6 %	34,2 %
<b>Distribution of measurements at wards</b>		
· Orthopedic surgical ward (09-4)	34,2 %	27,2 %
· Orthopedic surgical ward (12-4)	35,1 %	39,5 %
· Gynecological ward (12-5)	30,7 %	33,2 %
<b>Patients at nutritional risk according to NRS 2002 (3)</b>	34,6 %	31,6 %

Table 2. Percentage of patients achieving a dietary intake of minimum 75% of requirements before and after the implementation of CCP on the wards and the corresponding p-values.

	Original concept Buffet trolley system (BTS)	New diet concept Pre plated concept (CCP)	p-value
<b>All patients</b>			
An energy intake $\geq 75\%$ of requirement	58 % (33/57)	74 % (28/38)	0,116
<b>All patients</b>			
A protein intake $\geq 75\%$ of requirement	53 % (30/57)	55 % (21/38)	0,801
<b>Patients at nutritional risk</b>			
An energy intake $\geq 75\%$ of requirement	33% (3/9)	67 % (8/12)	0,130
<b>Patients at nutritional risk</b>			
A protein intake $\geq 75\%$ of requirement	33 % (3/9)	58 % (7/12)	0,256

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