

LB-308**MAIN BARRIERS AND COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES IN PROMOTION OF PROTEIN CONSUMPTION IN COMMUNITY-DWELLING SENIORS – 3 QUALITATIVE STUDIES**

J. O. Linschooten^{1,*}, M. H. verwijs², M. A. E. De van der Schueren², A. J. C. Roodenburg¹

¹HAS University of Applied Sciences, 's-Hertogenbosch, ²HAN University of Applied Sciences, Nijmegen, Netherlands

Rationale: Recent studies revealed that 15.4% of community-dwelling older adults do not meet recommended daily intake of 0.8 g/kg BW/day, and it appears difficult to increase protein intake in this setting. Opportunities for modifications of current dietary behavior of community-dwelling (CD) older adults were investigated in three qualitative studies in which we aimed to identify needs and preferences (study 1), barriers and promoters (study 2) and level of knowledge (study 3) regarding the use of high protein products.

Methods: Ninety CD older adults (age ≥ 65 y) were recruited at daily activity centers. Risk on low protein intake was assessed using ProteinScreener 55+. To gain insight in needs and preferences of older adults with regard to meals and meal products (study 1, n=30), visual information on eating behavior was assessed using photovoicing. Participants were asked to photograph all consumptions for 3 consecutive days (2 week days / 1 weekend day) and data was verified during post photovoice interviews. In studies 2 & 3, semi-structured interviews were conducted to identify protein consumption related barriers, opportunities (n=20) and knowledge and communication challenges (n=40) respectively.

Results: From ninety CD older adults (mean age: $75.6y \pm 7.8$) 61% scored a chance on low protein intake. Photovoicing data (study 1) showed that dietary patterns of 16 participants (n=30) consisted mainly of traditional products, such as potatoes, dairy, fruits, cheese and meat. Most participants followed a strict meal pattern. In post-photovoice interviews, participants indicated not to be willing to change their current eating behavior. Barriers for inadequate use of protein products were 'lack of knowledge', 'inflexibility', and no urge to receive dietary advice. Examples of promoters were 'trust in professionals' and 'product offers' (studies 2,3).

Conclusion: Older adults have no sense of urgency to increase protein intake, possibly linked to low or incorrect knowledge on the importance of protein. One of the challenges for professionals would be to motivate inflexible seniors to change their eating pattern, to optimize protein intake.

References: -

Disclosure of Interest: None declared