**Background**

Busy hospital wards are not always conducive to meal enjoyment. Mealtimes can often be hurried and overlooked, negatively impacting on quantity of food consumed\(^1\). Conversely, evidence indicates a dining room setting can benefit mealtime experience and nutritional outcomes\(^2\). Malnutrition is associated with many complications that impede recovery putting patients at an increased risk of morbidity and mortality\(^3\).

In January 2016 six Rehabilitation Assistants (RA’s) were employed at the Stroke Centre (SC), Llandough Hospital as part of the Integrated Stroke Workforce Plan assisted by the CSIT.

**Aims**

Primarily utilising RA’s to improve the patient’s mealtime experience, increase social interaction and improve patient satisfaction.

**Method**

As part of a 3 month pilot a seven day lunch club was implemented in the SC to fit in with the 7 day rehab ethos. Lunch club was facilitated daily in the SC’s dining room from 11:45am onwards with meals being served at 12.30pm. Patients were encouraged and supported to attend the dining area by available ward staff, including RA’s and a Dietetic Support Worker (DSW). Additionally, support, in the form of cutting up of food, assistance with feeding and regular prompting regarding eating and drinking was offered by RA’s and the DSW as indicated. The RA’s and DSW recorded the number of attendees to lunch club. Feedback from patients, relatives, RA’s and the DSW was encouraged and comments collated and subsequently communicated to the CSIT for their ‘Improvement Dashboard’.

**Results**

**Number of Patients Attending Lunch Club**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>PATIENT ATTENDANCES TO LUNCH CLUB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JANUARY 2016</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEBRUARY 2016</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCH 2016</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References**


**Conclusion/Recommendations**

Lunch club has proven to be an extremely popular rehabilitation activity at the SC. Mealtimes especially at the bedside can lead to feelings of isolation leading to loneliness and reduced engagement with eating and drinking. The findings of this project indicate that the patient’s mealtime experience was enhanced whilst eating in the company of others. Patient satisfaction increased with greater numbers of patients attending and returning to lunch club on a daily basis.

Recommendations – 1) Lunch club to continue seven days a week, with a longer term aim to include other mealtimes in the dining room. 2) A further study to measure the amount of food consumed at lunch club, compared to standard care.