

## WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

*Malnutrition is a common, yet often unspoken, issue among hospital patients. Around 5,400 patients become malnourished in hospital each year, leading to other health issues and increasing length of stay.*

## SIGNIFICANCE OF ISSUE:

*“Complications include increased risk of infection, longer time for wounds to heal, longer hospital stays, less responsive to treatment and an overall poorer quality of life.”*



Hospital-acquired malnutrition is an overlooked issue in Australia’s health system. It is commonly caused by poor diet, complications in illness resulting in poor nutrient absorption, or nutrient loss.

Many advocates for the issue have pointed the blame to poor hospital meals provided to patients during their stay, and a scandal involving many Australian hospitals circulated in 2020 when images of unappetising foods were posted in online forums and news articles.

Hospital-acquired malnutrition affects approximately 5,400 patients each year.

## 2-3 KEY USERS:

Vincent has recently been discharged from a 2-week hospital stay following a fall.

Pat is a nurse on the General Medicine ward and is convinced he witnesses patients suffering malnutrition after long-term stays.

Gloria works in food preparation at the Royal Melbourne Hospital and is concerned about the types of food that is given to patients on a regular basis.

## 2-3 POINT OF VIEW STATEMENTS:

Vincent is suffering an unusual infection which is GP believes has stemmed from malnutrition since his stay in hospital.

Pat struggles to keep on top of nutritional needs for his long-term patients because they don’t have access to the types of foods they require.

Gloria worries about the patients eating the food she prepares for them as she is not able to tailor meals for an individual’s specific needs.

## KEY IMAGES: (2-3 key images with annotation)



An image published in the Daily Mail, when the Royal Adelaide Hospital was under scrutiny for their patient meals.

Changes at 6 Months			
Parameters	Control (n=75)	Intention to treat (n=85)	p value
Percentage BMI Change (mean)	-0.42	-0.46	0.548
Percentage Weight Change (mean)	-0.22	-0.06	0.864
Re-admission rate (mean)	4.8	5.1	0.731
Hospital bed days (mean)	58.5	61.6	0.923
Mortality (n)	18	17	0.570
Drop out (n)	22	14	0.151
Changes at 24 Months			
Parameters	Control (n=41)	Intention to treat (n=44)	p value
Percentage weight change (mean)	2.9	2.1	0.654
Re-admission rate (mean)	8.9	9.6	0.898
Mortality (n)	38	43	1
Drop Out (n)	36	29	.079

Rates of change in hospital patients.

## INDUSTRY SECTORS:

- Food and beverage manufacturing
- Education (health higher education)
- Public and private healthcare
- Agriculture
- Import/exports
- Transport
- Equipment supply/manufacturing
- Government services



Nutrition staff preparing meals at Lee Health in Florida.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

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