Older People and Malnutrition

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Who are we?

**ILC-UK**
- established in 2000
- An independent, non-partisan think-tank dedicated to addressing issues of longevity, ageing and demographic change.

**European Nutrition for Health Alliance (ENHA)**
- Established 2005
- Raise awareness of malnutrition as a significant problem of public health that is at once widespread, under-recognised and under-treated
Malnutrition: the problem

- Studies have shown that up to 40% of patients are malnourished upon admission to hospital.

- BAPEN - Malnutrition Screening Week (2007) in the UK

- 28% of people in hospitals and 30% in care homes are malnourished

- Estimated 1 in 10 older people living in the community are malnourished

- Estimated cost of malnutrition in the UK ~£7.4 billion.
What causes malnutrition?

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Social Exclusion
- Ill health/disease
- Medication
- Dentition
- Mobility
- Transport
- Poverty
- Access
General awareness of the issue malnutrition is poor
The issue has not yet risen to the political agenda.
Professional training is poor - a recent UK survey found that 40% of GPs did not think malnutrition was a problem.
Malnutrition is under-recognised and under-treated.
Treatment guidelines exist, but they are rarely applied in practice.
Nutrition therapy has no ‘place’ within health and social care budgets.
What can we do?

- Estimating cost of burden of illness in Europe
- Screening across care and in community
- Address food poverty issues
- Transport
- Community support
- Social inclusion through community projects such as shopping clubs, food co-ops etc
- Influence policy
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