

**School of Health Sciences  
Honours Research Project**

**Title:** Describing meal time activities and dietary intakes of residents in high level nursing home care before and after a volunteer feeding assistance program.

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**Project Details:** Nursing home residents in high level care will often require assistance getting to the dining room, require help positioning themselves for a meal, accessing the meal and may need complete feeding assistance. Many factors will influence how well residents eat their meals, including such issues as their appetite, health status, the meal quality, meal temperature, social support and ambience in the dining room. Several studies have investigated these factors in a nursing home setting, however the risk of malnutrition is still a concern. Banks et al (2007) utilised the SGA and reported malnutrition prevalence rates of 50% and 49.2% in two aged care residential settings in Brisbane. Males in residential care and patients above 80 years were reported to have a higher risk of malnutrition.

A local aged care provider is soon to introduce a program to train volunteers to assist and encourage residents with meals. This study would involve collection of dietary intake data and observations about the activities at the main meals, with consideration of the environment and ambience.

**Number of Students:** 1-2

**Special requirements:**

Criminal record clearance card and NSW Health vaccination card up to date.  
Early starts (7am) and late finishes on some days.

**Skills required:**

Good communication skills (written and verbal)  
Ability to work as part of a team

**What will be provided:**

Training in weighed plate waste techniques  
Training in observational techniques  
Training in the use of Mini Nutritional Assessment (MNA), which is a nutrition assessment tool validated for use in the elderly