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**NUTRITION SUPPORT AT THE END OF LIFE: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN FOOD SENSORY AND POOR ORAL INTAKE AMONG HOSPICE PATIENTS****Audrey Lim Soo Yen<sup>a</sup>, Soh Wan Keem<sup>b</sup> and Tan Yew Seng<sup>c</sup>**<sup>a</sup>SingHealth Residency, Singapore<sup>b</sup>Bright Vision Hospital, Singapore<sup>c</sup>OncoCare Cancer Centre, Singapore

The preferences for food is determined by sensory evaluation of taste, smell, appearance, texture, hearing and perceived characteristics from food memories, and they actively influence patients' choices before, during and after meal times. It is widely known that oral intake nearing the end of life is challenging due to many reasons. However, there is limited data patients' preference for food and fluid of hospice patients in Singapore.

**Aim:** The aim of this study is to explore hospice patient's preference regarding their diet by investigating their sensory evaluation.

**Method:** A qualitative semi-structured interview was conducted on 11 Chinese patients admitted to the hospice ward of Bright Vision Hospital on their subjective food preferences based on their sensory evaluation. All the participants reported loss of appetite, poor oral intake (of ½ share or less of a standard 1500-calorie meal plan per day) were assessed to have cancer-associated malnourishment (based on physical examination of the temporalis muscles, orbital area and clavicle bone). Patients selected are cognitively intact with an AMT score of 7/10 and physically fit to be interviewed for 20 minutes. This study did not include patients of other ethnic groups as majority of the patients are of Chinese ethnicity and the hospital serves mainly Chinese meals. India/ Malay could not be adequately represented in this study. The original recordings were analyzed by two researchers independently.

**Results:**

Table 1. Food Preference

Four main food preferences were observed, namely, cold drinks, flavour enhancer, high heat cooking and social environment.

## Preferred Examples

Cold beverages	Coca cola, Soya bean drink, Plain Milo®, juice
Thinner consistency	Juice-based supplements available at retail shops Conclusion

**Conclusion:** As patients are better able to tolerate fluids, rather than solid food, serving cold beverages, of preferred choice and in small amount, may continue to provide the nutrition support towards the end of life. Further research would be helpful to ascertain if providing cold beverages with nutritional characteristics, would optimise energy intake so as to delay malnutrition and improve quality of life.

**Biography**

Audrey Lim Soo Yen was born in 1982. She received her MBBCH BAO (Hons) at National University of Ireland, Galway. She completed her basic speciality training Paediatric (RCPI Ireland) in 2012. Currently, she is working at Singapore under Singhealth family medicine residency. Her main interest is in palliative care medicine and end of life care. She always believe "The end of life deserves as much beauty ,care and respect as the beginning".

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