

Press Release



For immediate release

11 January 2012

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Please note brand new Press Office Media Hotline number - **0800 048 1714**

BDA Malnutrition Campaign Hand in Hand with National Nutrition and Hydration Week 2012

The British Dietetic Association (BDA) is proud to be a supporting partner of the National Patient Safety Agency's Nutrition and Hydration week (23-29th January 2012), titled '**A taste of patient safety**'.

Poor nutrition and hydration leads to poor health, prolonged hospital length of stay and increased costs to the NHS. The consequences of poor nutrition and hydration are well documented and include a greater risk of infection, poor skin integrity and delayed wound healing, decreased muscle strength, depression and, sadly, premature death.

Nutrition and Hydration Week runs with the support of key partners, such as the BDA, to reinforce and focus energy, activity and engagement on nutrition and hydration as part of patient safety improvement.

This important awareness week also takes place alongside the BDA's wider national campaign **Mind the Hunger Gap** (www.mindthehungergap.com) which aims to highlight levels of malnutrition in older people living in their own homes in the community (conservatively estimated to be around 1,000,000 individuals on any given day).

While The World Health Organization cites malnutrition as *the* greatest single threat to the world's public health, it is still widely believed that malnutrition is restricted to the third world population. Quite simply, it is not.

Siân Burton, BDA Vice Chairman and Chairman of the BDA's Communication and Marketing Board, said:

“Malnutrition and dehydration is a massively unrecognised blight on our society and the Nutrition and Hydration week is an excellent addition to the BDA’s Mind the Hunger Gap campaign, which focuses attention on those older individuals suffering from malnutrition and dehydration in their own homes.

“Can you believe that today in the UK a third of all adults admitted to hospitals and other care settings are suffering from malnutrition and/or dehydration?”

“What is painfully clear is that good practice and general guidance from numerous professional bodies are not enough. We need firm regulations to ensure this is addressed in our hospital and care settings as well as coordinated community action plans to address this insidious public health problem.”

Nutrition and Hydration Week runs from 23-29 January 2012

(<http://www.patientsafetyfirst.nhs.uk/Content.aspx?path=/Campaign-news/nutrition-and-hydration-week/>).

The BDA’s Mind the Hunger Gap campaign was launched in November 2011 and will run throughout 2012 (www.mindthehungergap.com).

ENDS

For more information / interview requests, please contact the BDA Press Office on

0800 048 1714

Notes to the Editor:

- **Mind the Hunger Gap Facts & Figures**
More than 3 million people in the UK are at risk of malnutrition with the vast majority, about 93%, living in the community setting, 5% in residential care and 2% in hospital
- One million older people in the United Kingdom eat less than one meal a day.
- Greater use of healthcare and costs associated with malnutrition mean:
 - 65% more GP visits;
 - 82% more hospital admissions;
 - 30% longer hospital stay.
- The health and social care costs in the United Kingdom directly associated with malnutrition comes to more than £13 billion per annum (based on 2007 prices).
- Problems associated with malnutrition include:
 - Poorer immune responses, meaning the likelihood of infections and ill health is greatly increased.
 - Reduced muscle strength.

- Weaker respiratory (breathing) muscles, which result in breathing problems and frequent chest infections.
 - More difficulty keeping warm.
 - Slower wound healing and longer time needed to recover from illness.
 - Low mood, little interest in everyday activities and self neglect.
 - Increased amount of admissions and readmissions to hospital, and longer time spent on each admission.
- In the fight against malnutrition, dietitians should:
 - Provide specialised dietary advice.
 - Be involved in the early stages once a patient has been screened.
 - Be an integral member of the secondary and primary care teams.
 - Help devise and implement effective nutrition policy locally.
 - Take a lead in the coordinating a nutrition steering committee/group in the hospital and community environment to ensure provision of appropriate nutritional management, care pathways and monitoring happens.
 - Offer appropriate nutrition advice on an individual/group level.
 - Train and support other healthcare professionals on how to identify risk of malnutrition.
 - Assess an individual's nutritional/dietary requirements.
 - Contribute to delivering cost effective services.
 - Visit the BDA website at www.bda.uk.com
 - Visit the **Mind the Hunger Gap** campaign website at www.mindthehungergap.com
 - The British Dietetic Association, founded in 1936, is the professional association for registered dietitians in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is the nation's largest organisation of food and nutrition professionals with over 6,000 members.
 - Dietitians are the only nutrition professionals to be statutorily regulated, and governed by an ethical code, to ensure that they always work to the highest standard. Dietitians work in the NHS, private practice, industry, education, research, sport, media, public relations, publishing, Non Government Organisations and government. Their advice influences food and health policy across the spectrum from government, local communities and individuals.