



OLDER PEOPLE SPECIALIST GROUP

Winter 2025

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Hello and welcome to our Winter Newsletter!

The end of the year is fast approaching and I hope you are able to take some time for yourself to spend with friends and family! Don't forget to take a moment to reflect on the things you have learned and achieved this year and what you are looking forward to in the new year.

It has been an exciting and fulfilling year for the OPSG with the launch of Research and Education Grant as well as lots of other work to promote and advance our specialism.

Read on for our news and updates including some feedback from our members survey!

Upcoming Webinar: Muscle Meets Metabolism – Managing Sarcopenic Obesity

Wednesday 17th December 2025 @ 12:00–13:15

We're excited to host a joint webinar with the Obesity Specialist Group exploring Sarcopenic Obesity. Muscle Meets Metabolism – Managing Sarcopenic Obesity will bring together leading voices in the field, featuring **two expert guest speakers** who will share the latest insights on assessment, clinical challenges, and practical management strategies.

More information on how to register is available [here](#)

Committee Vacancy



We are still on the look out for a new treasurer to join the committee. Our treasurer co-ordinates all financial matters within the committee and it's a great way to get involved with the committee.

Full training is available for this role and volunteering with the OPSG committee is a great way to develop a wide variety of skills that can help you develop your career and is a wonderful opportunity to help support the development of our members and the older people specialism.

For a confidential and informal chat about what's involved with these roles you can contact our chair at jen.grant@thefoodtrain.co.uk

More information on how to apply and full job descriptions are available [here](#)





Results of your members' survey

Thank you to all our members who took the time to fill in our members survey. Your views are very important to us and the committee is working hard to ensure that we provide you with useful resources, CPD, and support. We have included some of the results below as well as what we are planning to help you get what you want out of your membership.

Members said

They would like to see **more resources** they could use with patients.

We are

Planning **new resources** in different formats based on your feedback.

Members said

Financial constraints are a main barrier to completing research or service improvement projects and submitting abstracts to conferences like the BDA Research Symposium.

We have

Launched the **Older People Specialist Group Research and Education Grant** to help cover some of the costs associated with carrying our research, service improvement projects or attending conferences.

For more information and to apply *click here!*

Members said

They would find **more webinars** useful as part of their professional development.

We plan

To organise and deliver **more webinars across 2026** for our members to access learning opportunities for free.

Nutrition Support: Why We Say “Food- Based”, Not “Food First”

Traditionally, *food first* has meant using everyday foods and drinks to boost overall intake and meet nutritional needs before considering other nutrition support interventions such as oral nutritional supplements (ONS), enteral nutrition, or parenteral nutrition. However, national guidelines- such as the Nutrition and Hydration Digest and Care Home Digest- now favor the term food-based approach.



Food-Based Strategies

- Eat little and often
- Fortify meals with nutrient-dense ingredients (e.g., skimmed milk powder, cheese, nut butter)
- Encourage nutrient-rich snacks between meals (e.g., full-fat Greek yogurt, fortified rice pudding, cheese and biscuits)
- Offer fortified milky drinks
- Use finger foods for those living with dementia
- Enhance taste and flavors for those experiencing taste changes

Why the change?

Because food should always be the foundation of managing malnutrition, even when ONS are added later. The phrase food first can imply that supplements are a superior second-line option, which isn't the case.

For practical ideas, explore:

- [BDA Malnutrition Food Fact Sheet](#)
- [PrescQIPP Fortified Diet Recipe Book](#)

What Does the Evidence Say?

Although research is complex, the Cochrane review by Baldwin et al. (2021) suggests that the benefits of ONS likely come from increasing overall nutrient intake- not from any special ingredient. So, if we can achieve the same nutrient boost through food, we can expect similar clinical benefits.

Let's work together to use consistent, appropriate language and reinforce the principle that food-based approaches remain central to nutrition care for older people.

Reference

Baldwin, C. & Weekes, C.E. (2021) Dietary advice with or without oral nutritional supplements for disease-related malnutrition in adults (Review). Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD002008.pub5>



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Membership Perks

A little reminder

As an OPSG member you have access to a range of resources and opportunities on the OPSG pages of the BDA website. Log in and:



Here you will find resources - including our Outcome Indicators Toolkit, newsletters, webinar recordings, and much more.

BDA Research Symposium 'Healthy ageing, frailty and older adults' stream

If you are involved in research, audit or service evaluation/ improvement which aligns with our stream, please consider submitting a short abstract by the deadline above for the opportunity to disseminate your important work.

Date for 2026 TBC.

You can now also apply Older People Specialist Group Research and Education Grant to help cover some of the costs associated with carrying out our research, and service improvement projects.

click here!

If you have anything to share or suggestions for committee activities, please get in touch. Contact us via our email address or by following us on social media

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