PROMOTING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE FOR DYSPHAGIA

_Uptake of IDDSI resources is promoted by ICDA as an evidence-based approach to Dysphagia Management, per ICDA Board of Directors March 1, 2017_

BACKGROUND PROVIDED BY INTERNATIONAL DYSPHAGIA DIET STANDARDISATION INITIATIVE

Modification of food textures and drink consistencies is one of the most common intervention approaches used to help individuals experiencing dysphagia to eat and drink safely. The terminology used to describe food and drink modifications can vary widely from country to country, region to region and even between practice settings. Consequently, miscommunication and misunderstanding has led to severe and often fatal consequences for individuals with dysphagia.

The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (www.IDDSI.org) has developed an international framework with clear definitions and terminology that is relevant for all ages, all cultures and all care settings, with the goal of improving safety for those who experience dysphagia. In addition, practical, easily accessible and inexpensive methods for testing each food and drink level in the framework were also developed. These testing methods use simple tools such as forks, spoons, chopsticks, fingers and a commonly available 10 ml syringe. This allows patients, caregivers and institutions to easily test food and liquids at the point of service to ensure that they are as prescribed.

IDDSI has developed standardized terminology based on science and evidence for best practice and built international consensus that has crossed professions whose practice includes dysphagia assessment and treatment. The development process included a review of existing national standards, a global consultation with over 5000 stakeholders about current dysphagia practices and a systematic review of existing literature looking at the influence of food texture and liquid thickness on swallowing physiology.

Implementation of the IDDSI framework into practice is underway around the world. Industry is preparing to implement the terminology over the next two to three years. The IDDSI board continues to work with local, regional and international volunteer champion teams to facilitate implementation through education at conferences, webinars, consultation meetings and sharing of resources.

ICDA Board agrees it is important that dietitian-nutritionists as members of the healthcare team managing dysphagia diets are aware of the IDDSI terminology, standards, implementation plan and resources. We appreciate that the IDDSI Board of Directors has offered to follow up by briefing national dietetic associations and providing access to informational and educational resources.

Visit the IDDSI website at www.iddsi.org to learn more about the initiative, sign up for updates and newsletters. Become an IDDSI champion and make use of the IDDSI resources and tools to help with your implementation.

-- END --