

## A comparison of the amount of Oral Nutritional Supplement drinks consumed between two randomly allocated drinking methods

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Oral Nutritional Supplement (ONS) drinks have been shown to have positive benefits on weight within older adults<sup>(1)</sup>. However, consumption of these drinks has previously been found to be low, with 63% of ONS drinks given on elderly care wards being wasted<sup>(2)</sup>.

Our previous work within hospitalised patients agreed with these low levels of consumption. It also found 91% of hospitalised patients consumed ONS drinks from a straw directly into the container. We hypothesised that ONS consumption could be improved by changing the method used to drink the ONS drinks.

Participants were randomly allocated into one of two groups; to consume their ONS drinks given in a glass/beaker or to consume their ONS through a straw inserted directly into the container.

Nurses and care staff were instructed to give ONS drinks three times per day on alternate days over a one week period. The amount consumed was documented using the quartile method assessing proportion consumed (Sips, Quarter, Half, Three-quarters, All) and converted into a proportion of the drink consumed (0.1, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75 and 1 respectively).

24 nursing home residents took part in this study; aged 86.3+/-8.9 (range 66–97 years), Mini-Mental State Examination score (MMSE) 11.3+/-9.7 (range 0–30). Eight residents were randomly allocated to consume their ONS drinks through a straw inserted directly into the container and sixteen residents were to have their ONS drinks given in a glass/beaker. There was no significant difference between these randomly allocated groups based on their age, MMSE or Mini-Nutritional Assessment (MNA – short form).

The average number of ONS drinks given to participants by nursing staff over the week study period was 7.5+/-2.4. This was not significantly different between the two drinking methods. This indicates that the convenience of giving ONS drinks with a straw rather putting it into a glass/beaker did not impact on the proportion of ONS drinks given to the Nursing Home residents studied. However, the amount consumed was found to be significantly higher when ONS drinks were served in a glass/beaker rather than when a straw was inserted directly into the container ( $p = 0.002$ ) (Table).

Method of consumption	Number of drinks	Mean	St Dev	SE Mean
Proportion consumed via a glass/beaker	130	0.81	0.29	0.03
Proportion consumed through a straw	50	0.62	0.4	0.06

These findings indicate that the consumption of ONS drinks would be improved within older adults if they were served in a glass/beaker rather than inserting a straw into the container.

1. Milne AC, Potter J, Vivanti A & Avenell A (2009) *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (2): Art. No.: CD003288. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD003288.pub3.
2. Gosney M (2003) *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 43(3), 275–80.