

Partners' meetings

Kick-off meeting at the University of Surrey in Guildford, February 2003

The main purpose of this two day meeting (organised by the Coordinators) was to allow partners to get to know each other and to familiarise themselves with matters of project management and communication which would be important to the subsequent smooth running of the project.

Participant recruitment topics such as age groups, definitions of living alone/living with others, issues of representativeness, methods used, inclusion criteria and quotas were agreed. Data production and handling was discussed and included consideration of standard protocols, development and validation of data collection tools, use of previously validated measures (e.g. SF36), data archives (at national level and project level), confidentiality, data protection issues, cultural issues and language issues. During the discussion on data analysis, agreement was reached on how to deal with cross-cultural comparisons, use of software and analysis methods.

WP 2 and WP 3 were discussed in detail. Standard protocols were presented by each WP leader and discussed by the group thus enabling the leader to produce revised versions. Plans for dissemination were also introduced.

Second meeting at INRAN in Rome, March 2003

The Italian partner organised this meeting so that final decisions about WP 2 and WP 3 could be made and all partners could move forward into the piloting and data collection phase. For WP 2, yoghurt was selected as the functional food, and the convenience food selected was vegetable soup. Much of the discussion around WP 3 was about the difficulty of observing people shopping and how this would affect their behaviour. The lead on this WP was able to take away lots of useful information to put the finishing touches to the standard protocol.

Discussions on WP 4 focussed on the desirability of focus groups or interviews and the type of services provided by the different countries. The Danish partner then introduced WP 7, which will aim to produce a tool to measure the food-related quality of life in the age groups of concern in this project.

The meeting also included some useful demonstrations. The Swedish partner demonstrated qualitative interviewing, important for WP 3-6, and then gave a brief analysis of the interviews. The UK partner demonstrated a software programme MAXqda, for possible use in analyzing qualitative data. It was agreed that the developer would run a workshop at the next partner meeting in Karlsruhe.

About the Dissemination and Exploitation Consensus Panels (DECPS)

The **Food in Later Life** project will benefit from the assistance of DECPS, both at a pan-European Level and at a National level. Some of the roles performed by these panels are as follows:

- Provide specific expertise and advice on industry, management issues and matters relating to health and social care services.
- Encourage the dissemination of European databases arising from **Food in Later Life** to research centres and industry.
- Assist the development of consumer-friendly tools to allow manufacturers and caterers to assess food choices and food provision preferences in older people. Also the consumer-friendly tools to allow health professionals to assess nutritional status in older people.
- Explore the potential for targeted ranges of food products and services for older people, according to identified preferences.

The pan-European platform will consist of a small group of stakeholder representatives from the manufacturing, retail and service industries, relevant charities and policy making departments of governments. This panel will meet three times during the project; the meetings taking place during a partners' meeting. The first will be at the partner's meeting in Uppsala in Spring 2004. The partners will prepare for this event by taking part in an internal DECPS during the meeting in Karlsruhe in Autumn, 2003.

All partners will be encouraged to set up National DECPS so that the same issues can be addressed with specific reference to national issues.

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Web: www.foodinlaterlife.org



What are the project's key objectives?

- To generate longitudinal, qualitative and quantitative scientific data on the relationship between food intake, nutritional well being, health and quality of life among older people.
- To understand the specific food procurement and consumption requirements of older men and women living alone as compared to those living with others.
- To compare data from two age groups (65-74 and over 75).
- To undertake active dissemination and consultation with stakeholders, thus enhancing older people's nutritional well being, health and quality of life through food and service provision.

What are the project's key deliverables?

- Comparative information (the role of foods, food acquisition, meal planning, meal preparation skills, social networks) between men and women living alone and with others; and in eight different countries in Northern, Southern and Eastern Europe.
- Consumer friendly tools to allow manufacturers and caterers to understand food choices and food procurement preferences and to enable health professionals to assess food-related quality of life in older people.
- New targeted ranges of food products and food services for older people, according to identified preferences.

The project Work Packages

The work programme is divided into a series of Work Packages (WPs) which are interrelated and interdependent. WPs 2-6 form the basis for the development of a tool to measure food related quality of life. This tool will be used in a cross-sectional sample of older people from the eight participating countries to examine the relationship between food, nutritional well being, health and quality of life (WP 7). Using a range of methods including semi-structured interviews, observational techniques, food and procurement diaries, open ended interviews and quantitative questionnaires WPs 2-6 will build a clear picture of the issues which underpin how food is related to the quality of life and health of older people.

WP1 (Project Management) ensures effective management, monitoring and co-ordination of project quality, timing, resources (financial and personnel), organisation and communication.

WP2 (Food selection in later life) investigates the extent to which convenience, enjoyment, health and risk drive food selection in later life. Older peoples attitudes and beliefs about categories of foods such as convenience and functional foods will be assessed.

WP3 (Procuring foods and planning/preparing meals in later life) determines the interaction between shopping, food selection, economic constraints and meal preparation skills in older people.

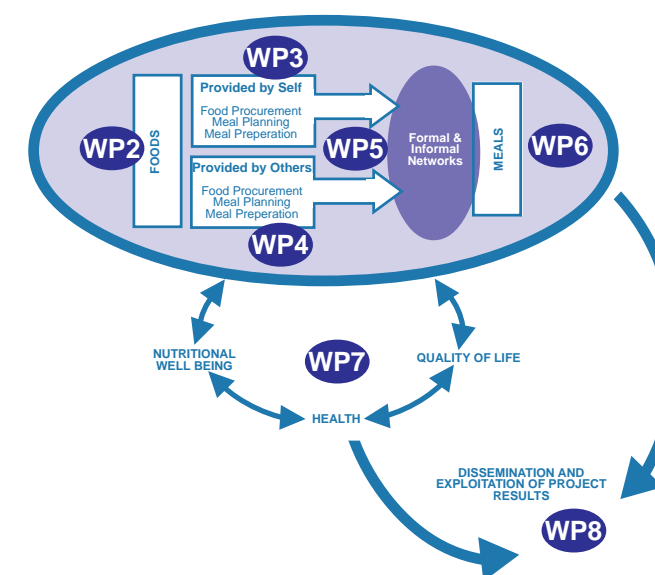
WP4 (Satisfaction with food-related services available to seniors) investigates user satisfaction with food-related services. It will address a range of food-related services (e.g. home help, meals on wheels, luncheon clubs, delivery services, shopping facilities) available to older people.

WP5 (The role of formal and informal networks in food procurement, preparation and consumption) determines the role of formal and informal networks in enhancing health-promoting food provisioning and consumption among older people

WP6 (Determining the role of meals in later life) determines differential role that meals, snacks and beverages play in enhancing health in later life.

WP7 (Assessing senior's food-related quality of life) determines the relationship between food, nutritional well being, health and quality of life in older people.

WP8 (Dissemination and exploitation of project results) secures effective dissemination and exploitation of the project results to key stakeholder groups.



Meetings

Karlsruhe, Germany (17-19 September 2003)
Uppsala, Sweden (28-30 April 2004)
Barcelona, Spain (27-29 October 2004)
Warsaw, Poland (Spring 2005)
Guildford, UK (Autumn 2005)

Coordinator profile: The University of Surrey

Monique Raats and Margaret Lumbers are the joint project co-ordinators of **Food in Later Life**. Both are members of the University's Food Consumer Behaviour and Health Research Centre. Monique and one of the other **Food in Later Life** team members, Richard Shepherd, are co-directors of this research centre. Margaret is a Senior Lecturer in Food Management in the Consumer Services Group, School of Management. She is also leading WP 4 (Satisfaction with food-related services available to seniors). The **Food in Later Life** team also includes Wendy Hunter (appointed as Research Fellow for the project) and Anita Eves of the School of Management. Wendy Hunter will be working on WPs 2-4. Charo Hodgkins, who has extensive experience of managing technical projects within blue chip companies, has been specially appointed to assist Monique and Margaret with the running of the project.

The University's Centre for Research in Ageing and Gender (CRAG) is represented by its co-directors: Sara Arber and Kate Davidson who are medical sociologists. Sara and Kate are leaders of WP 5 (The role of formal and informal networks in food procurement, preparation and consumption). Their group also includes a recently appointed research fellow, Helen Marshall, who will be working on WP 5 and WP 6.

The University of Surrey will also be actively involved in all experimental WPs. The WP devoted to dissemination is also led by the University's **Food in Later Life** team, but in this they will be helped by their subcontractor, Margaret Ashwell of Ashwell Associates who is supported by Anne de la Hunty.

Project Partners

- University of Surrey (UniS), Guildford, UK
- Istituto Nazionale di Ricerca per gli Alimenti e la Nutrizione (INRAN), Roma, Italy
- Federal Research Centre for Nutrition (FRCN), Bundesforschungsanstalt fuer Ernährung Institut fur Ernährungsoekonomie und –soziologie, Karlsruhe, Germany
- Uppsala University (UU), Department of Public Health and Caring Sciences, Uppsala Sweden
- MAPP, The Aarhus School of Business, Aarhus, Denmark
- Faculdade De Ciencias Da Nutricao E Alimentacao Da Universidade Do Porto (FCNAUP), Universidade do Porto, Porto, Portugal
- Warsaw Agriculture University (SGGW), Department of Human Nutrition, Warsaw Agriculture University, Warsaw, Poland
- University of Warmia And Mazury (UWM), Institute of Human Nutrition, Olsztyn, Poland
- University of Barcelona (UB), Grup d'Estudis Alimentaris, Barcelona, Spain

Progress on standardisation aspects of the project

The project is investigating different aspects of food-related quality of life across eight European countries and will compare data from two age groups (65-74 and over 75). Each country will be involved in each aspect of the project so it is necessary to ensure that the recruitment of subjects, and the collection of background data, are standardised across countries.

Exclusion criteria and screening questionnaire

The exclusion criteria were developed based on ongoing discussions between partners. During these discussions it became clear that additional exclusion criteria would be required for WP 3 (Procuring foods and preparing meals) and WP 4 (Satisfaction with food related services). A screening questionnaire has been developed based on these criteria to assist the recruitment of participants to meet quotas for gender, age and living arrangements.

Recruitment

The different partners are using a variety of mixed purposeful sampling to ensure that the samples reflect the local diversity but there are no quotas for education, income or access to shops. Mail-outs, presentations and posters at community groups, church groups, doctors surgeries, day-care centres and pensioners organisations will be used to gain initial contacts and this will be expanded using the snowball method. The methodology for all but WP 7 does not depend on having a nationally representative sample. However, it is essential for the validity of the food-related quality of life questionnaire that it is tested using nationally representative independent sample populations (of the same design) in each of the eight countries and so the recruitment for this WP will be carried out by fieldwork companies.

Background questionnaire

There was a consensus that certain questions would need to be asked of all participants and therefore a background questionnaire has been developed to obtain information on food and shopping practices, health, social characteristics and quality of life. In order to be assured that the questionnaire would provide comparable data after translation, input was sought from all partners. This questionnaire has now been finalised and is currently in use.

Code guide

A coding and scoring guide for the screening and background questionnaires is currently under construction.



Focus on WP 2: How do people make food choices?

The overall objective of this WP is to investigate to what extent convenience, enjoyment, health and risk influence older people's food choices. In particular, beliefs and perceptions about convenience foods and functional foods will be assessed and compared across culture, age groups and living circumstances.

The partner in the lead on this WP is the Italian team based at INRAN led by Anna Saba. They are responsible for the development of the methodology used to assess perceptions of functional and convenience foods. Data will be collected in all eight countries and so all partners will be involved at this stage. The analysis of the results will be carried out at INRAN where a number of hypotheses about food selection in later life will be developed and fed into the food-related quality of life questionnaire that will be developed at the end of the project.(WP 7)

Repertory Grid Method

In each country, 96 men and women, aged between 65-74 or over 75 and either living alone or with others will be recruited. They will be asked about their perceptions of and attitudes towards functional foods and convenience foods using a technique known as the Repertory Grid Method (RGM). This is a simple and easy way to collect information about beliefs and attitudes from older people. They will also be given a questionnaire on their attitudes to functional foods and convenience foods in general. A range of five functional yoghurts (two probiotic yoghurts, one low fat yoghurt, one enriched yoghurt and one containing a component that beneficially affects the body, e.g. cholesterol lowering) and two conventional yoghurts have been selected to represent functional foods. A range of vegetable soups, varying in their readiness to eat and convenience of packaging and storage and two types of prepared fresh vegetables have been selected to represent convenience foods.

During the RGM interview, the interviewee is asked to rank three products (either 3 yoghurts or 3 vegetable preparations) in the order they would choose to eat them and then to give reasons for their ranking them in this way. This allows the interviewer to elicit perceptions (or constructs) of the products on attributes which are important to the interviewee. In the second part of the interview, each of the products is then scored for each of the attributes elicited earlier in the interview, thus allowing products to be evaluated according to criteria important to older people themselves.

Once all the data have been collected, the Italian team will determine the construct classes that are appropriate for the whole project and analyse the results accordingly. This allows for comparisons of perceptions of functional foods and convenience foods to be made across cultures, age and living circumstances and barriers to their acceptance to be identified and addressed. Recommendations on the development of special foods for older people will be made.



Work Package 2 leader profile: Istituto Nazionale di Ricerca per gli Alimenti e la Nutrizione/ Unita' di Statistica (INRAN)

INRAN (National Research Institute for Food and Nutrition) is a public research organisation financially supported by the Ministry of Agricultural Policy and Forestry. It is institutionally in charge of implementing research activity, information and promotion in the food and nutrition field, in order to protect consumers and improve the quality of agro-food production. INRAN is responsible for WP 2 and is involved in all the other WPs.

The team involved in the **Food in Later Life** project has a wealth of experience in carrying out consumer studies aimed at assessing food consumption pattern and understanding factors influencing food choice. Anna Saba (INRAN permanent staff) has been working in the area of consumer's food choice and she is responsible for this activity at INRAN. Her main research interest is understanding factors influencing the choice of food products. She is responsible for WP 2 and she will be involved in all workpackages of the SENIOR project.

Aida Turrini (INRAN permanent staff) has been working in the area of food consumption surveys and nutritional data management at INRAN. She is closely involved in WP 5 and will be involved in all workpackages.

Federico Messina is responsible for the statistical analysis in WP 2 and he will analyse the WP 2's data for all partners. He will also be involved in WP 3,4,5,6, and 7.

Simona Martines is responsible for the software development for the data entry. She will carry out the data analysis of WP 5 in Italy. She will also be involved in WP 2,3,4,6 and 7.

