

Focus on WP4: How satisfied are older consumers with food-related services?

The overall objective of this work package is to investigate user satisfaction with food-related services including meals on wheels, luncheon clubs, shopping services and home helps. Older people living in their own homes represent a diverse but under-researched and increasingly important market segment whose specific consumer needs have rarely been evaluated.

Easy access to good quality food is central to the maintenance of health, independence and quality of life and yet there has been very little research undertaken to evaluate the extent to which such food services are effective and lead to user satisfaction.

The workpackage will be conducted in two stages.

The First Stage involves a systematic review of current literature (academic and 'grey' literature) as well as interviews with key informants from industry and government to determine the types and nature of food services available across Europe and the methods used to measure user satisfaction with these services.

The Second Stage will involve semi structured qualitative interviews with food service users to measure their satisfaction with a specified food service and food service providers to determine their perceptions of service delivery incorporating the Critical Incident Technique (CIT).

The lead partner is the UK team based at the University of Surrey and led by Margaret Lumbers (joint project coordinator). They are responsible for the development of the methods to undertake a systematic review of literature and will undertake the review of all English language peer reviewed literature and UK-based 'grey' literature. All other partners will undertake a review of literature published in their own language.

The UK team will also assess user satisfaction and provider perception of service quality. As data will be collected in all eight countries, a comprehensive picture of food service provision for older people living in their own homes across Europe will be obtained. This should lead to a deeper understanding of the types of food services older consumers prefer and which are most effective in terms of maintaining independence and food-related quality of life.

Critical Incident Technique

Service quality is a user's all encompassing judgement concerning service provision. The significance of satisfaction arises from its influence on overall perceptions of service quality. However, it is known that older consumers expectations of services are not only lower than those of younger people, but they are likely to decline further with advancing age.

As older people more than other users demonstrate a sense of gratitude that may inhibit frank feedback, the methodology for this WP has been chosen to elicit reliable and valid data. The purpose of the interviews is to enable users to express their feelings about the food service and whether it satisfies their needs. However, user expectations of the service have to be matched with what can be delivered by the provider. The interaction between the user and provider is termed the 'moment of truth' or service encounter.

Service quality is said to be of two types: the quality of 'normal' service and the quality of the exception that is when so-called 'critical incidents' occur. The critical incident technique (CIT) can be used for identifying quality improvement points for food services catering for the older market segment. It is a tool for reflecting user's perceptions of quality as well as satisfaction/dissatisfaction of services based on positive and negative critical incidents. The benefit of CIT is that the user is allowed to focus on those issues of importance to them. As such it provides conscious reflections on the user's experience based on their attitudes, beliefs, judgements and values.

Once the data have been collected, a series of review papers will be published and analysis of the interview transcripts including the critical incidents will be undertaken. Recommendations of the development of food services will be made and data on perceptions of satisfaction and quality of delivery will reported to key stakeholders including service providers and policy makers through a variety of dissemination activities including peer reviewed and trade journals.

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What are the project's key objectives?

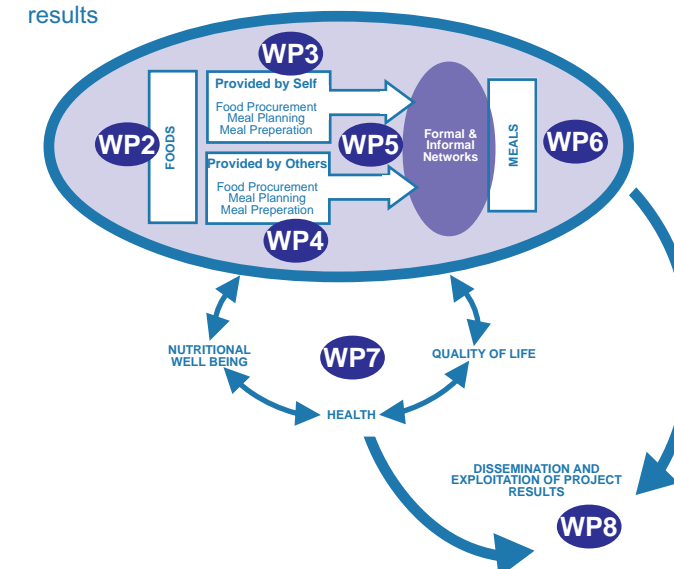
- To generate longitudinal, qualitative and quantitative scientific data on the relationship between food intake, nutritional well being, health and quality of life among older people.
- To understand the specific food procurement and consumption requirements of older men and women living alone as compared 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

The project Work Packages

The work programme is divided into a series of components called Work Packages (WPs) which are interrelated and interdependent. The project runs over a period of three years.

The results of the data collected in 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 (WP7).

- WP1: Project Management
- WP2: Food selection in later life
- WP3: Procuring foods and planning/preparing meals in later life
- WP4: Satisfaction with food-related services available to seniors
- WP5: The role of formal and informal networks in food procurement, preparation and consumption
- WP6: Determining the role of meals in later life
- WP7: Assessing senior's food-related quality of life
- WP8: Dissemination and exploitation of project results



DECP Panel Membership Confirmed

A very experienced group of experts and practitioners have been invited to join the Dissemination and Exploitation Consensus Panel (DECP) of the **Food in Later Life** project. They will bring wide-ranging experience, expertise and contacts necessary to exploit the findings of this project and improve the food-related quality of life for older people. Their expertise includes areas such as retail property research, marketing to the "grey market", product development and health requirements of older people.

The members of the Panel are:

Dr Yvonne Court - Partner & Head of Retail Research & Consultancy, European Research Group, Cushman & Wakefield Healey & Baker.

Dr Louise Davies - Established the Gerontology Nutrition Unit at London University. Dr Davies worked on the SENECA project A Survey in Europe on Nutrition in the Elderly: a Concerted Action.

Dr Conor Delahunty - Project Co-ordinator of the Healthsense, a project that examined Healthy Ageing: How Changes in Sensory Physiology, Sensory Psychology and Socio-Cognitive Factors Influence Food Choice?

Dr Stewart Granger - Responsible for Healthy Ageing research at Unilever Corporate Research.

Inge Hestvik - Head of the Pensioners Retired Organisation (PRO), Sweden (Pensionärernas RiksOrganisation).

Chris Igwe - Managing Director, Chris Igwe International. Specialising in strategic retail and real estate advice to international companies.

Andrew Isaac - Marketing Director, Sodexo Healthcare Services.

Wilfried Kamphausen - European Commission, Health & Consumer Protection Directorate-General

Christina Moeller - Head of Co-op Test Kitchen at Nordic Business Cooperation.

Dr Hayley Myers - Lecturer in Retail Management, School of Management at the University of Surrey.

Rhonda Smith - Managing Director of GCI Healthcare, a communications specialist in the dynamics of demographics and cross-sector issues affecting the older generation.

Prof. Wija A van Staveren - Professor in Nutrition and Gerontology at Wageningen University. Prof van Staveren worked on the SENECA project in Europe on Nutrition in the Elderly: a Concerted Action.

Dr Barbro Westerholm - President of the Swedish Association of Senior Citizens.

The first meeting of the DECP was held in Uppsala after the project progress meeting. A report of this meeting will be appearing in the next newsletter.

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)



Work Package 3 leader profile

Federal Research Centre for Nutrition and Food, (FRCNF), Karlsruhe

The FRCNF (Federal Research Centre for Nutrition and Food) is one of the research centres of the Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Nutrition and Agriculture in Germany and is a partner in this project.

The primary task of the FRCNF is to advise the Ministry on matters of human nutrition and consumer policy. It carries out basic and applied research in various areas in food sciences, human nutrition and consumer research, which is needed as the basis for such advice. The Institute of Nutritional Economics and Sociology (IOES) located in Karlsruhe, Germany, is one of the FRCNF's institutes and executes the research concerning this project.

Cornelie Pfau (FRCNF permanent staff) has conducted empirical polls by written questionnaires concerning school feeding and nutritional behaviour in private households, e.g. on consumers' competence in handling food. Her main interest is focussed on the nutritional behaviour of different consumer groups and the respective determinants. Above all she has been working in the area of nutritional behaviour of elderly people especially on meal planning and the assessment of meal patterns in senior households. She is responsible for WP3 and will be involved in all other workpackages of the **Food in Later Life** project.

Alexandra Heyer and Carolin Krems studied home economics and nutritional sciences (Oecotrophologie).

Carolin Krems was involved in the longitudinal study on an ageing population of Giessen, Germany (GISELA) in which the nutritional status and health status of elderly is observed. Her main research interest was the comparison of resting metabolic rate and body composition of young and elderly subjects.

Alexandra Heyer has been working in the field of social-scientific nutrition research and women's studies. Her main topics were qualitative and quantitative methods of social research as well as individual and socio-cultural determinants of nutritional behaviour in private households.

Both scientists are closely involved in Work Package 3 and they are also involved in the Work Packages 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Focus on WP3: How do people procure foods and what skills do they have to prepare foods?

The overall objective of this Work Package (WP) is to determine the interaction between shopping, food selection, economic constraints and meal preparation skills in older people. In particular, this WP will determine how the supply of food products and meal preparation abilities interact in determining the menus of older people.

How does this vary across cultures, age groups and living circumstances? What are the barriers and what are the strategies to overcome these? Furthermore ideas can then be generated which will help to develop new food products, more convenient for older people.

The lead partner for this Work Package is the German team based at the Federal Research Centre for Nutrition and Food (FRCNF), Karlsruhe led by Cornelie Pfau. The team is responsible for the development of the methodology for obtaining data on food shopping and meal planning. All partners will be involved in collecting the data in their countries and analysing it.

In each of the eight countries, 40 men and women, aged between 65-74 or over 75 and either living alone or with others will be recruited. It is important that they are involved in regular food shopping and meal preparation. People will be recruited through community groups, church groups, doctors surgeries, day-care centres, pensioners organisations and via newspapers, mail-outs and flyers.

Participants will be accompanied on a shopping trip and their behaviour observed. As they buy something, they will be asked what their meal preparation plans are for that item. It is important for interviewers to try and observe normal shopping behaviour and not let their presence affect shopping habits.

Participants will then be interviewed at home. First they will be asked why they bought particular items, what they plan to do with them and whether their shopping habits have changed. In the second part they will be interviewed about how they prepared a meal using a particular product, ie. what equipment they used, what preparation and cooking techniques they used, and what problems they had. They will also be asked what sort of kitchen appliances they have, how they learned to cook and how confident they are about their cooking abilities.

The interviews will be analysed to find patterns of interaction between the availability of particular foods and the cooking ability of the older person, and especially to identify barriers which prevent the person from shopping for and making the sort of meals they would enjoy. Findings will be used to develop information and recommendations for food related, social or health services as well as for relatives concerning the configuration of services and supplies to sustain the independence of elderly people in the field of nutrition. In addition this will enable recommendations for retailers for the type of food, in the appropriate surroundings, that will be suitable for older people with varying levels of cooking ability.

Partners meeting at the FRCN, Karlsruhe, Germany 17-19 September 2003

This two day meeting was superbly organised by Cornelie Pfau and her colleagues, Alexandra Heyer and Carolin Krems.

The meeting started with a progress report on WP2 (*How do people make choices in foods?*) which gave an opportunity to discuss data collection and questions arising from this WP. Afterwards, there were plenary discussions on WP3 (*How do people procure foods and what skills do they have to prepare foods?*), WP4 (*Satisfaction with food service providers*), WP5 (*Formal and informal networks*) and WP6 (*The role of meals*). Practical demonstrations of interviewing techniques took place in relation to WP6.

On the day before the main meeting, there was a practical demonstration of the software package, *MAXqda* (see following article). All partners agreed this was a very helpful tool to analyse qualitative data and it would enable the results obtained in the different countries to be analysed in a comparable fashion across countries.

A session was also held on dissemination and exploitation so that the partners could start looking ahead at opportunities for publications, databases, tools, products and services and identifying stakeholders who would be recipients of these deliverables. The partners also discussed the concept of the Dissemination and Exploitation Consensus Panels (DECPs), since the first of these involving external stakeholders is planned for the next meeting in Uppsala in Spring 2004 (see front page for related article).



Presentations to Conferences

"SENIOR FOOD QOL: a new European funded project" at the Pangborn Sensory Science Symposium, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, 20-24 July 2003.

"Nutrition and the elderly - 5 European Commission" at the 7th Asia/Oceania Regional Congress of Gerontology, Tokyo, Japan, 24 - 28 November 2003, (abstract published in *Geriatrics & Gerontology* 3 (suppl.1): S129)

"SENIOR FOOD QOL: a new European funded project" at the ESRC Growing Older Programme Closing Conference, London, UK, 1 December 2003



Two presentations at the 8th Nordic Nutrition Conference: Public Health Nutrition, in Tønsberg, Norway, 20-23 June 2004

The MAXqda Workshop with Anne Kuckartz at the Partners Meeting

The third **Food in Later Life** meeting at FRCN in Karlsruhe was an exciting time for the project. Thoughts turned to the future analysis of the qualitative data collected during the interviews for Work Packages 3-6.

The analysis of such vast quantities of textual data in eight languages presents a clear pragmatic challenge to the project. In order to ensure a systematic analysis of the data, it was decided the project should consider specially designed software to facilitate such analysis.

At the meeting in Karlsruhe, a workshop was conducted by Anne Kuckartz from MAXqda: manufacturers of the software, so that together, the partners could sample and evaluate this example of computer assisted qualitative analysis software. The workshop included a demonstration of the program and an explanation of its main features such as importing and exporting data, coding, searching on codes, using colour in identifying codes, memo writing, sharing memos between partners and defining variables.

As a result of this excellent workshop, it was decided this package would be appropriate for the needs of the project. It was agreed all partners should use the same package and that this program was user friendly and a helpful tool. Since the meeting in Karlsruhe, licenses for MAXqda have been purchased for all partners.