

# Food as one of a captive audience

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# Historically



Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century many Hospitals began to recognise the infamous reputation of hospital food. Food was supplied to Hospitals, Prisons and schools in a “mass production distribution schemes”. All earned an equally bad reputation.

Hospital Crown Immunity lifted in 1987.

2001 Lloyd Grossman Better Hospital Food Panel

- . Companies focus on high volumes of food to be provided at low cost

# Where does it come from?



Contracts often go to outside companies which specialize in preparing institutional food. A local MSU may well be using a medium sized company who also deliver to other large establishments in the area.

Distribution systems already in place to send, packaged and already mostly prepared food to establishments.

# What direction should we be going in?



“Proper nutrition is essential to recovery both physically and psychologically”

Source: Sharon Grant, Chair of the  
Commission for Patients & Public Involvement  
in Health

# What's it like when it arrives?

Upon reaching the unit;

- a) Past it's peak?
- b) Could be laden with salt and sat fat
- c) Might be High in sodium
- d) Contains other substances

YUM YUM!

# So what's changing?



1. Patients are more aware about unhealthy food choices

2. Demand for ethically and sustainably provided food types

3. Cultural demands more accepted

4. Local and Fresh gets a more positive response

BUT

5. Hospitals have to make efficiency savings

# Patient Factors

- Most of the patient group don't want to be in hospital. In fact they positively dislike their detention. So they are ready to grumble.
- Most of the patient group are there long term (years not months). So menu variation is important.
- No two patients have the same tastes!
- Low activity level lifestyle
- Weight gain through medication (some meds can make you hungry (olanzipine/respiradone))

# The MSU I was in: Eating Arrangements



- 5 wards, 75 patients (ICA through to Rehab)
- Large Canteen with staff appendix
- Seating for around 40 Patients and 15 staff
- About 6 Canteen Staff
- Salad Bar/Main Courses/Desserts
- Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner was an hour
- Sundays Takeaway (allowed hot food off of ward)

# Patients' Complaints

- Poor quality food (the food is bland)
- Small portion sizes
- Not enough choices (repeatable menus)
- Rotten fruit
- Hot food served cold
- Doesn't reflect cultural traditions
- Problems with Canteen Staff
- Someone's nicked my milk or cheese!

# Bad Patient Solutions

1. Get Friends and Family to bring in Food
2. Get a Takeaway if Unit allows it
3. Stock up on coke and crisps from the vending machine
4. Cook your own in OT or on the ward (ward meals very popular/Barbecues in Summer on rehab ward)
5. Eat when you go out on community leave
6. Fruit supplied direct to ward
7. Lose Weight by not eating much

# Good Patient Solutions



- Wider range of veg options and Halal meals
- Cater for people with diabetes
- More healthy options
- Availability of healthy snacks
- Support from a qualified dietician
- SU suggestions inputted into Menu's (Food Forum)

# Possible Ideas

- Anything from Good Patient Solutions
- Local sourced food
- Good quality ingredients
- Trained staff
- Allocated Pudding chefs
- Avoid reheating where possible
- Service User surveys (annually?)

# Other Issues

- Food safety
- Staff qualifications
- Takeaways
- Sometimes ward staff bring in their own homemade foods
- Security issues; Kitchen knives designated as sharps

# Why I love Hospital Food!



“I love hospital food because hospitals are stressful and food is comforting, especially food with lots of sugar and salt and fat, which is to say the most delicious and destructive food of all. They ease the anxiety of the hospital by getting me high on my brain's own dopamine”.

# Conclusion



The best I can say is that it was fuel to get me through what was normally a very slow day.

# Sources



- My own experiences of living in an MSU
- Wisegeek.com
- Natural news.com
- Maisonneuve.org
- Jay Raynor article , Telegraph Sept, 2006
- Tom Blackwell, National Post Aug 2009