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## Journal of the American Medical Directors Association

Volume 8, Issue 2, February 2007, Pages 110-114

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Original study

### Nutrition and Involuntary Weight Loss: A Pilot Study of an Educational Intervention for Nursing Home Surveyors

Portions of this work have been presented at meetings of the American Geriatrics Society, May 2004, and the Gerontological Society of America, November 2005.

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jamda.2006.09.010>

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#### Objective

To describe the knowledge and attitudes of nursing home (NH) surveyors before and after a brief educational intervention related to nutrition and involuntary weight loss in nursing home residents.

#### Design

A questionnaire covering knowledge and attitudes about nutrition was given 1 month before and 6 months after a targeted educational intervention.

#### Participants and Setting

## State of Maryland nursing home surveyors

### Measurements

A 24-item questionnaire of NH surveyor knowledge (11 items) and attitudes (13 items) regarding issues related to nutrition and involuntary weight loss in NH residents.

### Results

Overall surveyors' knowledge scores increased from 68% (SD, 17%) pre-intervention to 76% (SD, 18%) post-intervention ( $P = .11$ ). Knowledge related to the lack of the effect of tube feeding on survival in NH residents with end-stage dementia was the only knowledge item that improved significantly with the intervention (39% correct pre-intervention and 68% correct post-intervention,  $P = .04$ ). There were no changes in attitudes toward the diagnosis or treatment of nutrition after the intervention.

### Conclusion

Overall, NH surveyor knowledge related to nutrition and involuntary weight loss varied widely across topic areas. Neither knowledge nor attitudes were substantially affected by a brief educational intervention. Development of effective educational interventions for NH surveyors should be a priority for stakeholders in NH care.



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### Keywords

Nursing home; surveyors; nutrition; involuntary weight loss

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This study was supported by a grant from the Borchard Foundation Center on Law and Aging, Salt Lake City, UT.

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