

# Dysphagia and unintentional weight loss in old residents in Danish nursing homes

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## Rationale

Dysphagia in old residents in nursing homes is common and associated with malnutrition and poor functional outcomes. The primary aim was to study the relation between dysphagia and unintentional weight loss among residents at nursing homes. A secondary aim was to evaluate the implementation of the local guideline regarding screening by a national nutrition evaluation tool (EVS) used in Danish municipality care, where residents should be screened at a minimum of every 12 weeks.

## Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted in 11 nursing homes in 1 municipality. Data on unintentional weight loss, dysphagia and anthropometrics were collected from the municipality record system (LIM and CURA). Inclusion criteria were age  $\geq 65$  years, living in nursing homes and screened by EVS during 3 months in 2022.

## Conclusion

**The main result of this study was that only one third of the residents were nutritionally assessed by the EVS according to the local recommendation. Data indicates that dysphagia and unintentional weight loss was common, but due to the low compliance to required EVS registration we could not fully answer the primary aim. The study points out that further efforts is needed to implement nutrition guidelines in order to improve quality of care, health and quality of life in older adults in Danish nursing homes.**

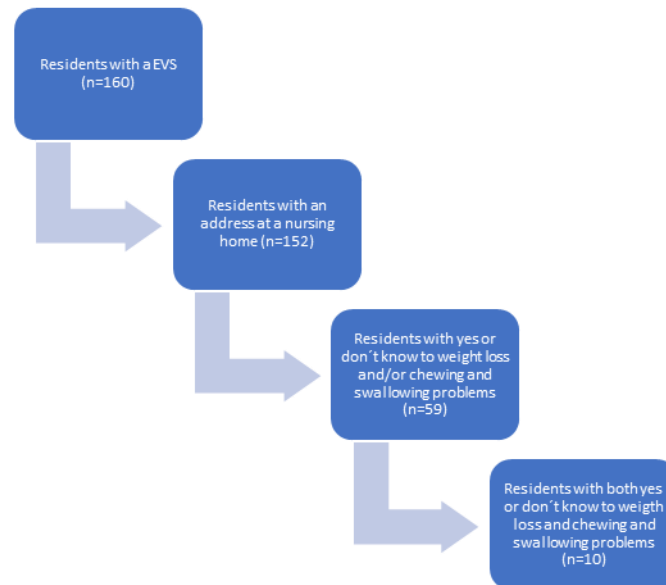


Figure 1: Flow diagram for residents with both dysphagia and weight loss.

## Results

Among a total of 464 residents, 152 (33%) had an EVS evaluation within the required 12 weeks according to the local guideline. Among the 152 EVS assessed residents, 30 displayed dysphagia and 10 had both unintentional weight loss and dysphagia. The electronic record revealed that another 9 residents among the 30 with dysphagia also had unintended weight loss.

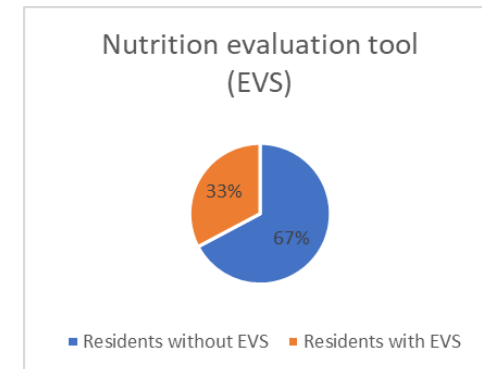


Figure 2: Distribution of residents with and without a EVS.

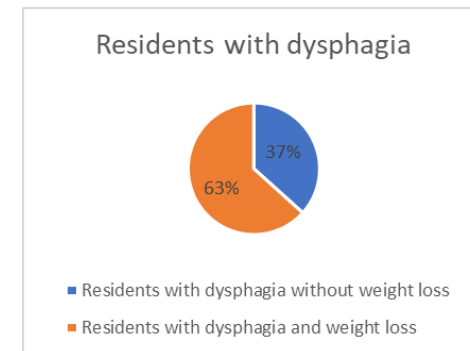


Figure 3: The relation between dysphagia and unintentional weight loss.