

Jordan Fackler

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### **Abstract**

#### *Ethical Considerations in Nutrition Support for an Older Adult with Dementia and Malnutrition*

Malnutrition is a prevalent concern in older adults with dementia, due to disease progression causing oral feeding difficulties such as lessened interest in food, forgetting how to eat, food hiding behaviors, and dysphagia. Decreased oral intake is part of the natural progression for dementia, but this can be difficult for families to understand, and they often seek more aggressive forms of nutritional intervention, such as enteral nutrition feedings (EN). Although EN is frequently indicated for malnutrition, it has controversial ethical concerns within dementia patients, with little to no clinical benefit shown, and risk of complications. Current guidelines for dementia nutritional care emphasize comfort feedings, removing barriers to eating difficulties when able, and respecting patients' desires and autonomy. Recognizing that dementia is a progressive, terminal illness that will not improve even with nutrition interventions is vital when making nutritional considerations in care. Educating the patient and family members on comfort centered care, providing favorite foods, and the natural progression of nutritional decline in dementia is essential to guide decisions surrounding whether or not to use EN. This case report explores a clinical dietitian's care plan for a 90-year-old malnourished female with dementia and food hiding behaviors, and the ethical care considerations discussed with her family to promote quality of life.