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Eating and swallowing problems (dysphagia) are prevalent among patients in all health care settings including in the community. Dysphagia can cause medical complications to a point of a decrease in the patient's quality of life as well as death.

Texture changes and modifications of foods and liquids are a part of the therapeutic intervention plan of those suffering from dysphagia and are intended to maintain the safety of the patients and to improve the efficacy of eating and swallowing.

Findings, from a survey conducted three years ago, showed that there was no uniform standardized terminology of the various textures, their preparation and the way they are served provided to the patients in health care settings.

The national unit of Speech language pathology and the nutrition division in the Ministry of Health together with a committee of specialists in the field of dysphagia, led to the adoption of the 'International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative' (IDDSI), an international framework for the standardized terminology and definitions to describe texture modified foods and drinks.

For the purpose of promoting the use of the IDDSI standardized terminology in all health care settings, attached to this letter are the regulatory guidelines whose implementation and assimilation will contribute to the safety and quality of care in populations in need from childhood to old age.

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Head of the medical division



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Regulatory guidelines for the use of the IDDSI terminology in all health care settings

1. Background/introduction:

Dysphagia is prevalent in patients in all health care settings (In hospitals and in the community).

Dysphagia can cause many complications such as: Malnutrition (weight loss) in all age groups, dehydration, pneumonia, difficulty in swallowing medications, a significant decrease in the enjoyment of food, a decrease in quality of life, an increase in economic costs for the health system and an increase in mortality.

Modifying textures of food and drinks is part of the practical interventions in chewing problems and dysphagia. These interventions provide safety for the patients eating and drinking, as well as improving their eating and swallowing efficacy. By doing this the patients nutritional status and wellbeing can improve.

In order to protect patient's safety and health, there is a need to define standardized terminology to describe texture modified foods and thickened liquids as well as to describe simple testing methods to assess them. In Israel, until now there is no standardized terminology for defining food and drink textures.

2. Aim:

To define standardized terminology and definitions to describe texture modified foods and thickened liquids used for individuals with dysphagia of all ages, in all health care settings, as well as to describe simple testing methods to confirm the level a food or drink fits into.

3. Definitions:

3.1 Dysphagia- problem with eating and swallowing

3.2 IDDSI- *International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative*, an international framework for the standardized terminology and definitions to describe texture modified foods and drinks (thickened liquids).



- 3.3 The levels of the IDDSI food and drinks textures as described in the following website: <https://iddsi.org/Israel>
 - 3.4 Daily menu- all meals consumed during a day which include all foods and drinks in the correct texture which are adjusted to the patients' culture, health and nutritional status.
 - 3.5 Health care setting (medical setting)- in this manuscript, a HMO clinic or hospital or any other setting where patients receive medical treatment. Examples: disabled children's day care centers, hostels for the mentally ill patients, home care or any private organization who supplies health care to public or specific clients.
- 4. Responsibility and authority for implementation of these guidelines:**
- 4.1 Dieticians in all health care settings.
 - 4.2 Speech language pathologists in all health care settings.
- 5. Assimilation and implementation:**
- 5.1 The speech language pathologist and the dietician in every health care setting must be acquainted with the IDDSI terminology and with the objective testing methods which are described in Hebrew in the following website: <https://iddsi.org/Israel> which is updated from time to time.
 - 5.2 The foods and drinks textures in the different menus will be defined according to the IDDSI levels definitions.
 - 5.3 In each health care setting the speech language pathologist together with the dietician must determine the IDDSI level of each of the foods and drinks served to the patients (including thickened liquids).
- 6. It is in the responsibility of every health care setting to create internal guidelines(procedures) which will include at least the following processes:**
- 6.1 Sequence of information transfer- Updating and communicating between all relevant partners /subjects (At least between: speech language pathologist, dietician, kitchen staff, medical records);
 - 6.2 The texture adjustment of all foods and drinks for every patient (including thickened liquids);
 - 6.3 Assimilation and implementation;
 - 6.4 Documentation and monitoring;
 - 6.5 Continuity of care Including notating in the discharge letter.



7. Dedicated staff, which includes at least a dietician and a speech language pathologist will be nominated in each health care setting for the purpose of ensuring the assimilation and implementation of the following topics:

7.1 Creating/building a dedicated training program adapted for different staff members.

7.2 Creating a training program for the patients and their family/for the main caregivers so that they can best implement the recommendations pertaining to textures of foods and drinks.

8. Documentation: Record keeping, reporting and monitoring

The levels of the food and drinks will be recorded in the medical chart and will be noted in the discharge letter.

9. Inception: 9th of May 2023 (Two years from the authorization of this document).

Compliance with the guidelines in this document will be supervised from time to time by the Ministry of Health.

Please send this document to all those concerned at your institution.

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