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**Topic:** Malnutrition treatment and prevention

**Title:** Older Adults perspectives on nutrition and food choice – an opportunity for tackling malnutrition in the longer term?

**Presentation Type:** Oral

**Background:** Similar to many countries, Australia's population is ageing with over 24 % expected to be over 65 by 2056. To remain healthy in the community outlined policy change must occur as noted in the Living Longer, Living Better reform (2012). However, increasing rates of malnutrition in community-living older Australians suggests work is urgently required to understand basic food intake issues. The aim of this exploratory study was to explore the views of adults (> 70 years) food preferences, and current/perceived future nutritional needs and review with respect to current strategies.

**Methods:** Four focus groups (n= 18: men and 13 women) were conducted (November-December 2012). Two facilitators moderated the groups using a question framework to explore present/predicted views on nutrition, lifestyle and food preferences. Focus groups were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically by two independent researchers.

**Results:** Five themes identified included: Independence Preservation (underpinning an expressed determination to maintain current behaviours for independence); Changing Food Behaviours(encompassing changes in food acquisition, food consumption and preparation); Ageing Impacts Opacity (identifying gaps in acceptance of age-related capacity changes), Crucial Social Networks (recognition of fundamental social support systems) and Limited Future Planning (pinpointing a lack of systematic planning on managing personal future capacity).

**Conclusion:** This exploratory study exposed a plethora of factors influencing food and nutrition decisions for older Australians not clearly linked with current policy. These findings highlight the need for further ongoing research to support food related initiatives aimed at preventing malnutrition and support health outcomes for older Australians.