

# Supplementary enteral feeding delivered via PEG tube was found to be largely acceptable to patients with pancreatic cancer

## Perspective of patients with pancreatic cancer regarding a proposed supplemental tube feeding intervention: a qualitative study

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### INTRODUCTION

- Pancreatic cancer (PC) is the seventh leading cause of cancer-related mortality globally<sub>1</sub>
- Percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube used to provide supplementary nutrition may improve symptom severity, health outcomes and quality of life<sub>2,3</sub>
- **Aim: To explore the acceptability of supplementary enteral nutrition delivered by a PEG tube**

### METHODS

- **Participants:** Adult patients aged 18 years or older, with a diagnosis of PC who were registered to be contacted for future research with the Pancreatic Cancer Biobank
- **Setting:** Recruited from a single tertiary hospital in metropolitan Victoria, Australia
- **Design:** Qualitative semi-structured telephone interviews based on the Theoretical Framework of Acceptability<sub>4</sub>
- **Analysis:** Deductive approach from the Framework Method<sub>5</sub>, NVivo Release 1.6.1 to facilitate data management and analysis

### RESULTS

- 10 participants consented, 10 telephone interviews conducted between August 2022 to June 2023
- 4 overarching themes were developed

**1. Deterioration in physical and mental wellbeing due to PC-related nutrition impact symptoms** – maintenance of nutrition was important to participants

1. "I couldn't eat, I couldn't even look at food. And I felt very weak and no strength."  
[Participant 1, 77-year-old woman]

**2. Willingness to participate depends upon individual thresholds** – most participants were accepting of supplementary nutrition delivered via a PEG

2. "...you wouldn't have to worry about your food every day." [Participant 4, 60-year-old woman]

**3. Predicted perceived effectiveness outweighs anticipated burdens** – most participants acknowledged that supplementary enteral feeding would be an effective intervention

3. "I think it would be a big help... I'm not quite sure how much is getting through at the moment." [Participant 8, 92-year-old man]

**4. Adequate dietetic supports are required to maintain PEG at home with confidence** – easily accessible supports are vital to ensure safe and confident management of a PEG at home

4. I'd be quite concerned about doing it at home...people would have to show you how to do it, then that would be more helpful." [Participant 2, 77-year-old woman]

### DISCUSSION

- Home supplemental enteral nutrition via a PEG tube was largely acceptable to participants
- Most participants believed that the intervention would be effective to maintain nutrition whilst receiving palliative chemotherapy
- Accessible supports was considered vital to success of maintaining a PEG at home
- Perceived degree of deterioration and symptom burden contributed to an individual's willingness to participate
- Improvements in disease-related symptom severity, nutrition status and quality of life were key drivers for participants to regard the intervention with a positive affect

### FUTURE

- Future studies exploring delivery of home enteral nutrition should include consideration of personal experiences with cancer and chemotherapy, timing of intervention delivery, and easy-to-use accessible telehealth supports to ensure alignment with individual ethical values and increase acceptability

### REFERENCES

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