

Best practices of food waste management in the European healthcare sector

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Food waste in numbers

- Each year **1/3 of global food production** for human consumption is lost or wasted before reaching our plates. This is equivalent to 1.3 billion tonnes of edible food.
- In Europe and North America waste on average **95-115 kg/year**
- In industrialized countries **40% of losses happen at retail or consumer level**, but also in prior phases
- **Waste food means waste** money, labour, resources (energy, land, water) and increases GHG (8%)
- By saving 1/4 of the food currently lost or wasted, **870 million hungry people could be feed**



In healthcare facilities

- A certain amount of food waste is inevitable in a hospital setting
- Limited data available due to lack of quantification assessment
- **UK**
 - 121,000 tonnes of food waste and 49,300 tonnes of packaging waste
 - 93% to landfill or disposed of down the drain (macerators)
 - Of the food purchased, 18% is wasted:
 - 13,5% vs. 4,5%
 - Total cost of food waste to the HC sector is £230 million
- **Ireland**
 - Acute hospitals: 3,100 Tonnes (= €7.2 Million)
 - Pediatric hospitals: 2,000 Tonnes (=€4.4 Million)
- **The Netherlands**
 - 25% of the value of the food supply
 - Potential savings: €200,000
- **Capital Region (Denmark)**
 - 4,500 tonnes of waste annually - a portion of which is made up of food

Context

- By wasting less food, hospitals have the **opportunity** to:
 - Invest in better and healthier meals
 - Reduce complications and increase speed recovery
 - Fight against climate change and generate social and economic benefits
 - Change the old model of doing things – step for sustainability resource efficiency
- Current **targets**:
 - **International and European targets**:
 - **12.3 SDGs – 50% reduction by 2030**
 - Part of the EC Circular Economy Package
 - **National targets** – further targets needed:
 - **UK** - Courtauld Commitment - 20% reduction in food and drink waste from manufacturing and retail
 - **Dutch government** - 20% reduction in food waste by 2015



HCWH Europe's food waste survey

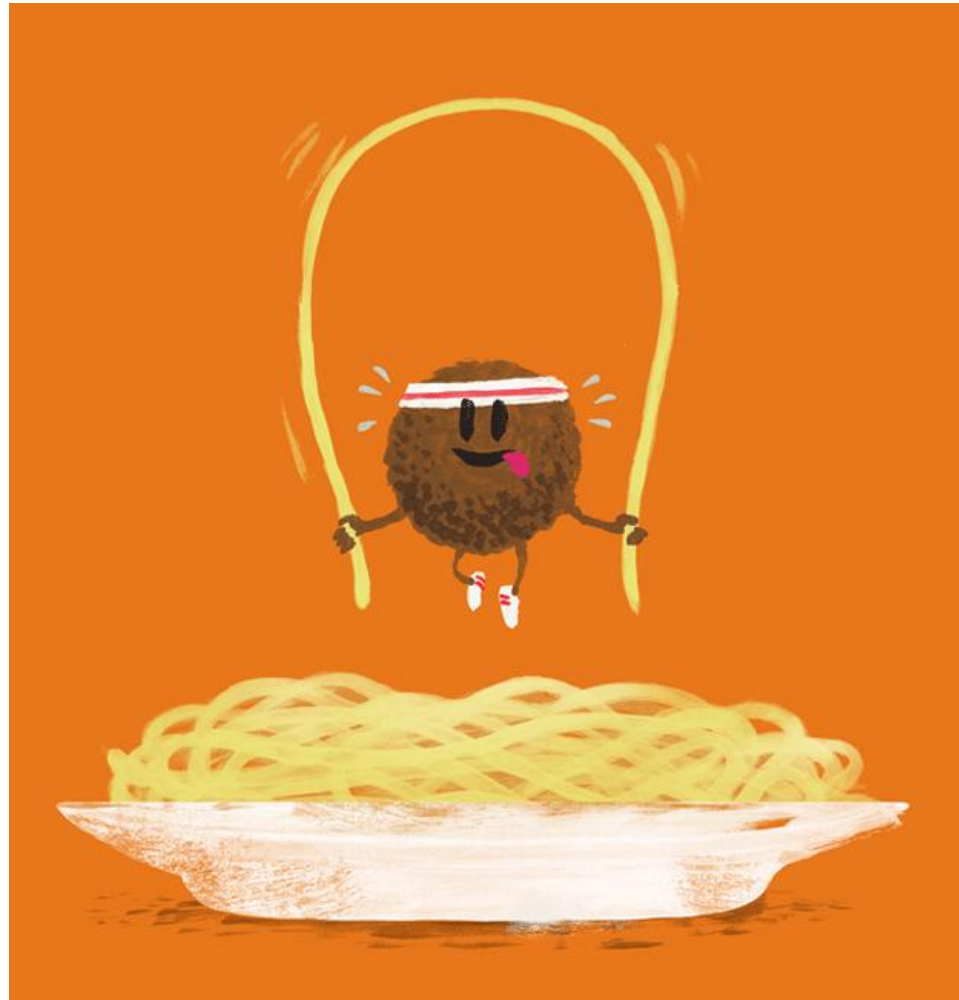
- **10 hospitals interviewed** in: Belgium (1), Denmark (4), France (1), Spain (2) and UK (2)
- Also, 2 institutions interviewed (Ireland and The Netherlands)
- **7 main questions**
 - How bad is the problem of food waste in your hospital?
 - What are the main reasons for food waste in your hospital?
 - How is food waste managed in your hospital? What is the process for controlling and/or monitoring it?
 - What foods are most likely to be wasted in your hospital? Why?
 - What strategies for reducing food waste have been attempted in your hospital? Which have succeeded, which have failed, and why?
 - What are the barriers to reducing food waste at your hospital?
 - What factors do you think would help reduce food waste?

Survey Results

- **4 broad issues/problems:**
 1. Meal ordering – unpredictability
 2. Portion size – variety – preferences
 3. Communication and training
 4. Constraints:
 - Quantification
 - Time and resources
 - Economic difficulties
 - Regulation – food donation



Best practices



Hvidovre Hospital (Denmark)

- 1,000 meals served/day
- **No data**
- **Food waste programme:**
 - Patients can choose from a menu card (menu à la carte) – the menu is different for the pediatric department
 - Ability to choose the quantity of the meal – just one small portion served initially
 - Kitchen staff serve meals to patients
 - ongoing dialogue with patients
 - Introduction of a strict date and inventory management
 - Attention to the aesthetics of the plates
 - Staggered closing by closing the canteens and cafeterias in stages, leftover food can be transferred to reduce the amount wasted.



The University Hospital Complex of Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

- 1,300 meals/day
- **2,5% of food waste** in regard to used food
- **Strategies into practice:**
 - Installation of a grinder/compactor
 - Flexibility to attend any request (8-22h)
 - Increase of variety
 - Reduction in the caliber of some fruits and the size of bread
- **In the future:**
 - Improving the communication with patients with the aid of TV or mobile phones
 - Exploring a partnership with diary companies
 - Target of achieving zero plastics



Freeman Hospital (UK)

- 750 meals/day
- **Average food waste: 6% annually**
- **Achievement:**
 - Installation of bio-digesters, which allow them to reduce costs for energy, water and landfilling - in £14,000
 - Control of their ordering system: 12 hours in advanced
 - Good communication between the kitchen and the ward
 - The provision of two different portions (elderly vs. general population)



Recomendations

- Know your suppliers and incorporate sustainable criteria in your PP
- Establish protected mealtimes
- Ensure patients can select different portion sizes
- Do satisfaction surveys to change menus, if needed
- Check your fridge
- Train your staff, also in terms on effective meal ordering, serving, customer care and adequate separation of waste
- Use transparent waste bins as a way to raise awareness between kitchen and ward staff on how much and what is discarded.
- Focus on prevention and explore some alternatives to redistribute surplus food
- Organise focus or work groups for testing different culinary innovations, consistencies or presentations





Thank you for your attention!

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