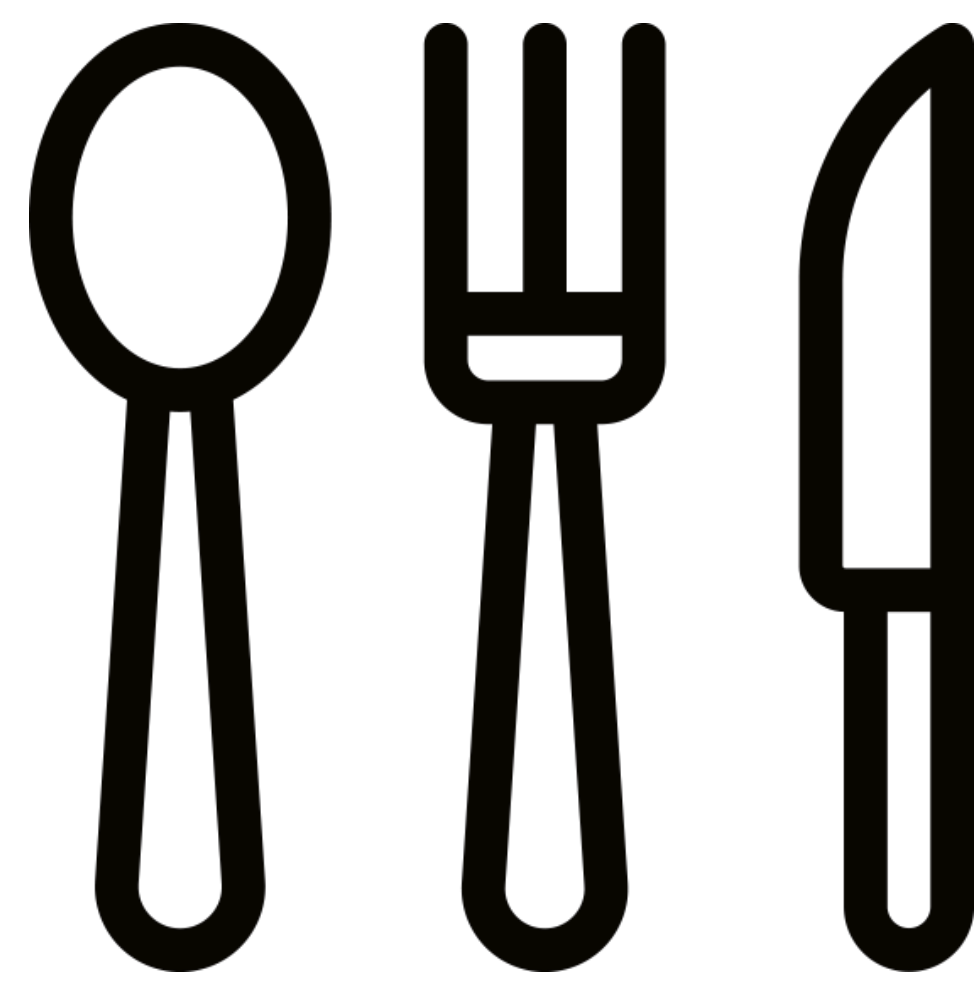




Singapore Healthcare Management 2021



Team Eat Safe! Improving Consistency of Diet Textures and Improving Patient Safety

Team Members: Chriselle Koh Wyn Jia (Speech Therapy), Chia An An (Speech Therapy), Tay Pei See (Speech Therapy), Chia Pei Ling (Food Services)

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Speech Therapists (ST) recommend diet textures and fluid consistencies that are safest for patients with swallowing difficulties (dysphagia). Dysphagia diet texture guidelines are provided by the ST department to Food Services for the preparation of the various diet textures. These include regular diet, regular soft diet, soft and chopped diet, minced diet and pureed diet.



Regular Soft Diet



Soft and Chopped Diet



Minced Diet



Pureed Diet

Photo credits to SATS

It is important that meals are prepared according to guidelines. If patients with dysphagia consume a diet texture that does not meet guidelines, this could lead to increased risk of aspiration, potential aspiration pneumonia, prolonged hospital stay and even mortality. Before intervention, we found that only 55.7% of meals served to patients met diet texture guidelines. Also, feedback was provided from STs to Food Services only on an adhoc basis.

MISSION STATEMENT

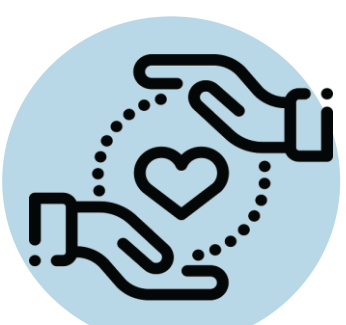
In 12 months, the project aimed to:



Improve the percentage of hospital diets that meet dysphagia guidelines to 90%.



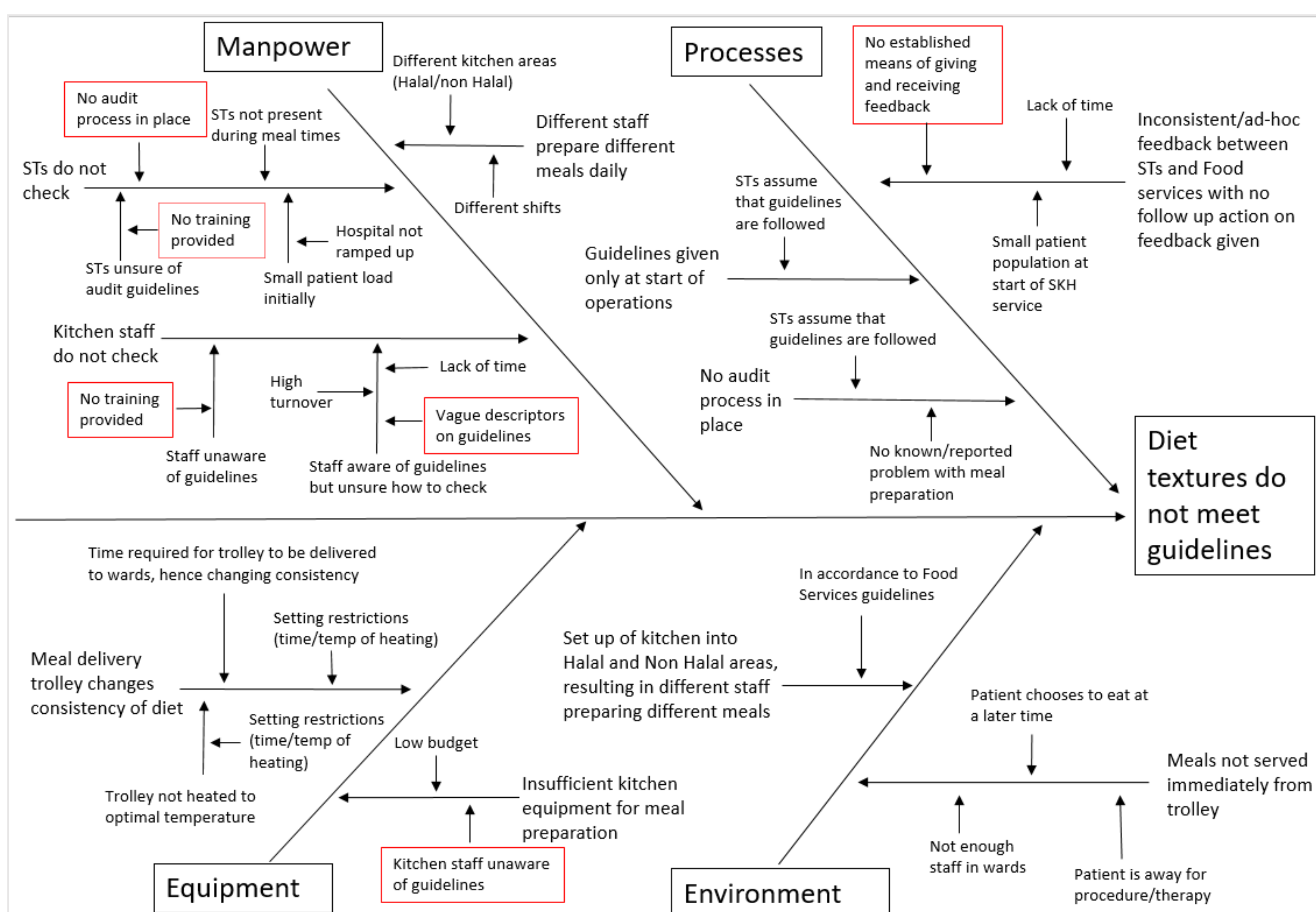
Reduce potential risks of aspiration pneumonia in patients with dysphagia.



Enhance and improve patient safety.

METHODOLOGY

To analyze the various root causes of the problem, the team conducted a cause and effect analysis using the fish bone diagram. A series of intervention was then carried out to target the main root causes of the problem, which are highlighted in red below.



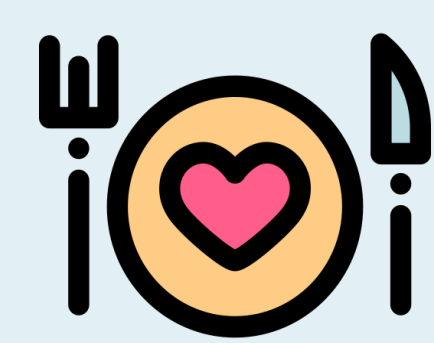
INTERVENTION



Intervention 1: Clarified and expanded on unclear descriptors used in the provided dysphagia diet guidelines, to make it clearer for kitchen staff to understand requirements.



Intervention 2: Developed an audit form based on these refined guidelines and initiated a work process for monthly audits by Speech Therapists. Training was conducted for all SKH Speech Therapists to use the audit forms and to carry out monthly meal audits.



Intervention 3: Carried out monthly meal audits and provided constructive feedback to Food Services and kitchen staff.

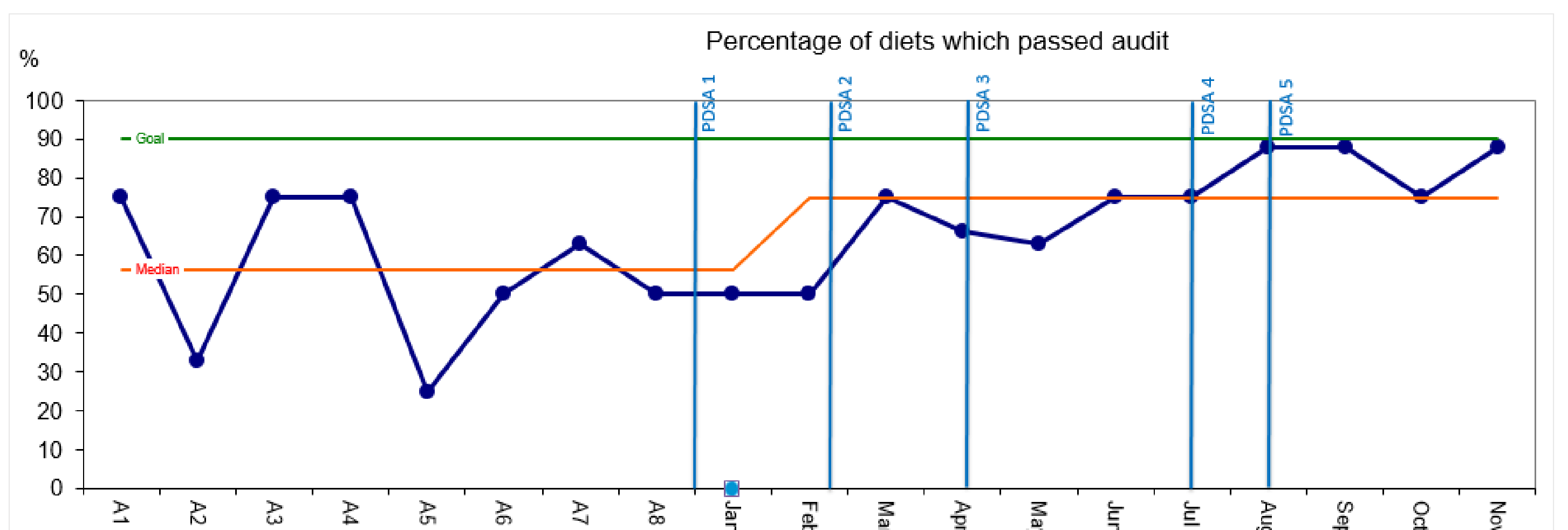


Intervention 4: Face to face discussions with kitchen staff on meal preparation methods and difficulties faced in meeting guidelines. Simulation of meal preparation and delivery processes was completed.



Intervention 5: Training core staff member of Food Services on guidelines and audit process. Videos provided for training purposes.

RESULTS



Across 12 months, there was an improvement in the median percentage of diets that met guidelines, from 56.5% to 75%. As shown on the run chart above, there are 9 data points above the median, demonstrating improvement.

SUSTAINABILITY PLANS

Overall, there was an increase in the percentage of hospital diets that met the dysphagia diet guidelines through the 12 month period. This in turn aims to reduce potential risks of aspiration pneumonia in patients with dysphagia and enhancing patient safety. Ongoing monthly audits with regular feedback to Food Services will aim to further improve the consistency of diet textures and percentage of diets that meet guidelines. There are future plans to increase the scope of our staff training to ensure that more staff are better equipped to prepare meals in accordance to the suggested guidelines.