

**B57**

**David Inzerillo M.S.**

Advisor(s): Thomas Wallach M.D.

Co-author(s): Dr. Simon Rabinowitz, Dr. Shahzaib Khan

**Inpatient Feeding Program for a Vulnerable, Underserved, Pediatric Population: A Pilot Study**

Background: Pediatric feeding disorders (PFD) encompass a variety of conditions that interfere with a child's ability to consume a developmentally appropriate diet essential for growth. These disorders, clustered in complex care patients, lead to nutritional deficiencies, social/behavioral delays and poor physical growth. Unfortunately, services such as intensive, multidisciplinary feeding programs have traditionally been limited for underserved populations. Our study describes a multidisciplinary pilot program highlighted by one week of comprehensive inpatient stay in an inner-city medical center. Methods: We describe 11 children between ages 8 months to 9 years with a diagnosis of failure to thrive or avoidant restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID) who underwent 1-week intensive in-patient feeding therapy. Each patient was assessed by a pediatric gastroenterologist and had baseline laboratory testing as part of the initial intake. Intensive feeding therapy sessions were conducted twice a day with a trained pediatric speech language pathologist who assessed barriers to oral feeding. Sensory and behavioral techniques were employed such as desensitization, texture fading, portion fading, demand fading, allowing choices and providing preferred foods to improve acceptance of age-appropriate foods. Outcomes were assessed as increased acceptance to variety of foods, increased intake during mealtimes and caregiver carry-over of feeding strategies. Patients were also monitored for changes in weight, caloric intake and subjective reporting by caregiver of improved oral intake. Behavioral and Development team was utilized to assess current developmental needs and optimize service provision. Results: Out of the eleven patients, five patients demonstrated weight gain during the in-patient admission week with only one patient having a documented weight loss. Ten out of eleven patients had acceptance to an increased variety of foods and successful carry-over of strategies