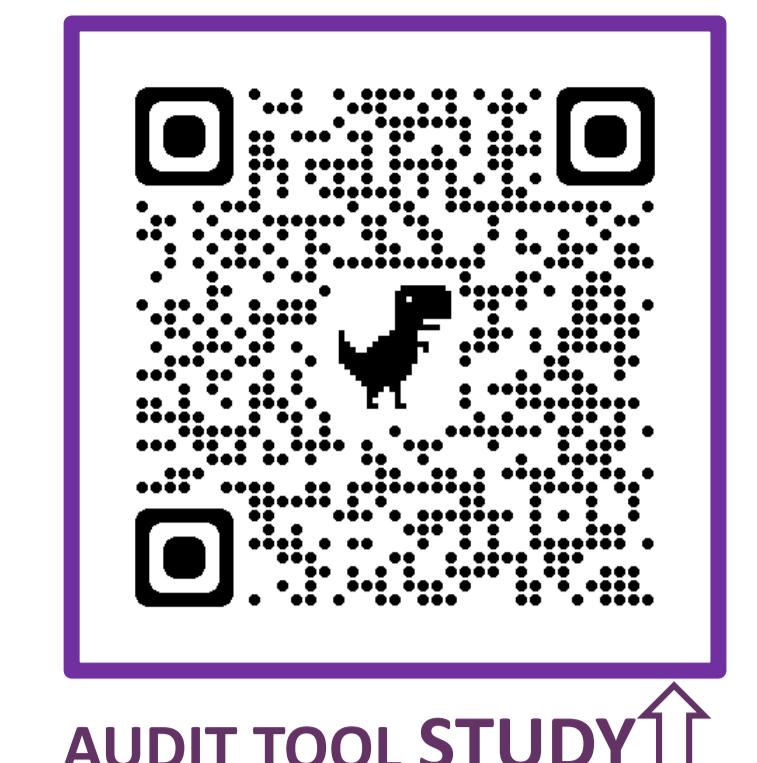


Barriers and enablers towards implementing food and food-related waste audits in hospital food services

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Background: The researchers of this paper previously published a food and food related waste audit decision tree tool to support hospital food services in designing their own site specific audit (scan QR code above). However, creating an audit decision tree tool for novel hospital food service practice doesn't guarantee it's uptake. The intended users of the tool must be consulted to understand its feasibility and face validity.

Aims: Therefore this study aimed to identify the perspectives of staff involved in the operation of hospital food services on (1) how the food waste audit decision tree tool is perceived to translate into practice within hospital food services, and (2) the barriers and enablers to conducting routine food and food-related waste audits in this setting.

Methods:

- Semi-structured interviews were completed via Zoom with 20 people who had knowledge of or worked in the hospital food service inside 11 Victorian public hospitals (e.g. food service dietitians, waste officers, chefs, sustainability managers, food service managers)
- Open-ended questions were asked to explore participants reflections on the waste audit decision tree tool and their perceived barriers and enablers towards food and food-related waste audit completion
- All interview data were read/listened to and grouped into major and minor themes

Results: Hospital size ranged between 18-600 beds with the predominant food service type being cook chill. Participants average age were 44 ± 11 years and 60% were female. The audit decision tree tool appeared to have face validity with a majority of participants reporting their support of the tool and believed it was detailed, encouraged different thinking and would facilitate decision making for the completion of a food waste audit. Preparing for an audit through conducting stakeholder meetings, providing education to food service team members, and facilitating communication between managers and staff were described to support decision tree use. 3 themes which determined the completion of audits were generated from grouping the data together, all of which were further categorised into barriers and enablers; 1) capacity: the time, labour and materials required to complete an audit 2) change: staff resistance to audit procedures and how to gain their buy-in 3) processes, governance and leadership: themes that either hinder or support the food service's capability to execute an audit (Figure 1).

Implications: The findings from this study demonstrate that the audit decision tree tool is ready to be used in a hospital food service to support them in designing and completing a food and food-related waste audit. Although, it needs to be customised to be fit for purpose within a site's capabilities and should consider the reported barriers and enablers presented here, as these may be similar or different. Considering these findings may also improve the experience and success of the waste audit.

References: 1. Cook N, Collins J, Goodwin D, Porter J. A systematic review of food waste audit methods in hospital foodservices: development of a consensus pathway food waste audit tool. Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics. 2022 Feb;35(1):68-80. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jhn.12928>

Findings of Aim 1 – Reflections on the audit tool

- Ready to be used in practice
- Could be used as an education tool
- Supports understanding of concepts
- Busy and confusing
- Higher knowledge required
- Recommendations to change the tool to be suitable for their food service was reported by 14 participants.

Findings of Aim 2 – The barriers and enablers



Processes, governance & leadership



Change



Capacity



Figure 1. Participant reported barriers and enablers to the completion of food and food-related waste audits. Red circles represent barriers and green circles represent enablers. White text are the major themes and the black text are individual minor themes.