



**Press Release from Bournemouth University**  
**2 September 2009**

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**Hungry in hospital, healthy in prison?**

Research undertaken by Bournemouth University (BU) nutrition academics has revealed that whilst UK prisoners are consuming a healthy balanced diet, hospital patients are leaving undernourished and hungry.

Academics from the Foodservice and Applied Nutrition Research Group, based within BU's School of Services Management, have undertaken various studies into the food delivery and consumption process among inmates and patients from UK hospitals and prisons.

The separate studies published in the *Journal of Foodservice and Nutrition* reveals that despite prisons spending less per person on meals, people are far more likely to go hungry in an NHS hospital than in a prison.

The researchers believe hospital patients face barriers in getting good nutrition, including not receiving assistance with eating and nobody monitoring if they are well fed.

Professor John Edwards, Director of the Food Service and Applied Nutrition Group, said around 40% of patients going into hospital were already malnourished but this situation did not tend to improve while there.

"If you are in prison then the diet you get is extremely good in terms of nutritional content," he went on.

"The food that is provided is actually better than most civilians have. There's a focus on carbohydrates, then there's the way they prepare the food, it's very healthy.

"They don't add salt and there's relatively little frying of food - if you have a burger then it goes in the oven.

"Hospital patients don't consume enough. If you are using food as a means of treatment then it's not working," he adds.

A full report of the combined results is due to be published in a leading academic journal later this year.

BU's Food Service and Applied Nutrition Group has carried out extensive research within and on behalf of a range of public sector institutions.

Its members Professor John Edwards, editor of the *Journal of Foodservice* and Dr Heather Hartwell, honorary editor of the *Perspectives in Public Health journal*, are well-established experts in the field of public health nutrition and foodservice.

**Notes to Editors:**

1. BU is the UK's Number One New University (first place among all institutions that became universities since 1992) according to The Guardian University Guide 2009 & 2010. ([www.guardian.co.uk/education](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education))
2. In the 2008 [Research Assessment Exercise](#) (RAE) BU is the fourth most improved university in the UK for the quality of its research (according to *Times Higher Education*).

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