FRAGRANCE ALARM CLOCK STIMULATES DEMENTIA SUFFERERS' APPETITES

Ode aims to reduce malnutrition in dementia sufferers by emitting delicious scents three times a day, encouraging patients to eat.

Almost half of diagnosed dementia sufferers don’t eat enough food, leading to weight loss and malnutrition. A new device called Ode aims to prevent that, by emitting delicious smells three times a day — encouraging patients to eat and stay healthy.

Ode was created as part of a government project in the UK called Living Well with Dementia, which recruited designers to create intuitive, design-based solutions to improve the lives of those with neurological diseases. Dementia patients often become depressed and disconnected from their diet — which usually consists of meals prepared by overloaded care givers — but familiar fragrances can be used to stimulate their appetite, since the sense of smell is directly connected to both emotion and memory.
The Ode system houses three fragrances — one for each meal of the day — all designed by perfumers and flavorists led by fragrance expert Lizzie Olstrom. Each aromatic cue is released in gradual waves of air over approximately three hours — the device is programmed to heat up the fragrance at a set time and to blow out the scented air using a fan. The fan also cools down the fragrance bottle after each short wave, before a patient's brain tunes out the smell. Caregivers can choose from a growing menu of smells, enabling them to personalize the device for each patient. Current scents include orange juice, beef casserole and cherry tart, and Ode are welcoming suggestions for their repertoire.

The device costs USD 420, which includes three months worth of fragrances. Ode have carried out tests on over 50 patients and found that over half gained 2kg during the 11 week trial. How else could dementia sufferers' senses be stimulated to improve their quality of life?

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