

1.1 Aims and hypotheses

The overall aim of this thesis, was to investigate whether culinary improvements of familiar meals could lead to an increase in health-related quality of life in a population of nursing home residents. The culinary improvement was based on a selection process from meal preference studies in old adults and culinary sessions. Thus, the thesis was subdivided in four overall phases (resulting in three papers) aiming to:

1. Identify the most liked in-between-meals for nursing home residents with dysphagia based on flavor and appearance and describe the basic sensory characteristics of these in-between-meals (**paper I**, pilot study 1).

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Sensory commonalities of the most liked in-between-meals can be identified in nursing home residents.

2. Investigate main meal preferences of nursing home residents based on appearance, flavor and texture and describe the sensory commonalities of these main meals (**paper II**, pilot study 2).

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Sensory commonalities of main meal preferences for nursing home residents can be found.

3. Describe the culinary optimization method of a menu shaped towards sensory preferences of nursing home residents (culinary study).

No hypothesis relevant.

4. Increase health-related quality of life in nursing home residents receiving meals-on-wheels using a menu with favourite meals that was culinary and sensory improved by chefs as intervention (**paper III**, cluster-randomized intervention study).

Hypothesis 3 (H3): A menu improved towards sensory preferences of the nursing home residents can increase their health-related quality of life.