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Introduction

Cancer patients often experience malnutrition and dysphagia which can negatively impact treatment tolerance, quality of life and survival. In order to meet nutrition guidelines for patients with cancer, special diets (high-protein, high-calorie, or texture-modified) are often prescribed by registered dietitians (RD). Few educational patient resources exist to help patients implement a food-first approach. The aim of this project was to produce a series of free books for (1) patients on treatment with weight loss/poor appetite (2) dysphagic patients on IDDSI texture-modified diets (3) cancer survivors requiring healthy eating advice based on World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) guidelines (4) Correcting cancer/nutrition myths for all oncology patients.

Methods

- Registered dietitians, graphic designers, food photographers and dysphagia chefs were involved in the development of these resources over a four year period.
- Energy and protein targets were established using nutrition recommendations for nutritionally vulnerable patients and best international guidelines.
- Dysphagia recipes were developed in line with International Dysphagia Diets Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) recommendations. Recipes developed were low volume and nutrient dense and analysed using Nutritics™.
- Healthy eating recipes were developed based on WCRF guidelines. Nutrition myths were gathered and scientific rebuttal of these claims written.

Results

A series of seven free books were developed for patients with cancer. For patients on cancer treatment, 'Good Nutrition for Cancer Recovery' is a 280-page high protein, high calorie cookbook for cancer patients with poor appetite or involuntary weight loss (Fig 1).

For patients finished treatment, or those with unwanted weight gain, a 130 page cookbook 'Healthy Eating for Cancer Survivors' was written based on WCRF cancer prevention guidelines (Fig 2).

A book on nutrition and cancer myths, 'The Truth Behind Food and Cancer' is a 45-page colour booklet providing evidence-based scientific explanations for common fad diets/nutrition myths in cancer (including detoxes, juicing, IV vitamins, alkaline diets etc) (Fig 3).

'Good Nutrition for Swallowing Difficulties in Cancer' is a series of 4 texture-modified cookbooks for patients with dysphagia (a 120 page book for each IDDSI level: Level 3 Liquidised, Level 4 Puréed, Level 5 Minced and Moist and Level 6 Soft and Bite sized) (Fig 4).

All books were professionally endorsed by the National Cancer Control Programme of the HSE (NCCP) and the Irish Nutrition & Dietetics Institute and 40,000 copies were printed and distributed to healthcare settings with sponsorship from Breakthrough Cancer Research.



Fig 1: Good Nutrition for Cancer Recovery, Second Edition

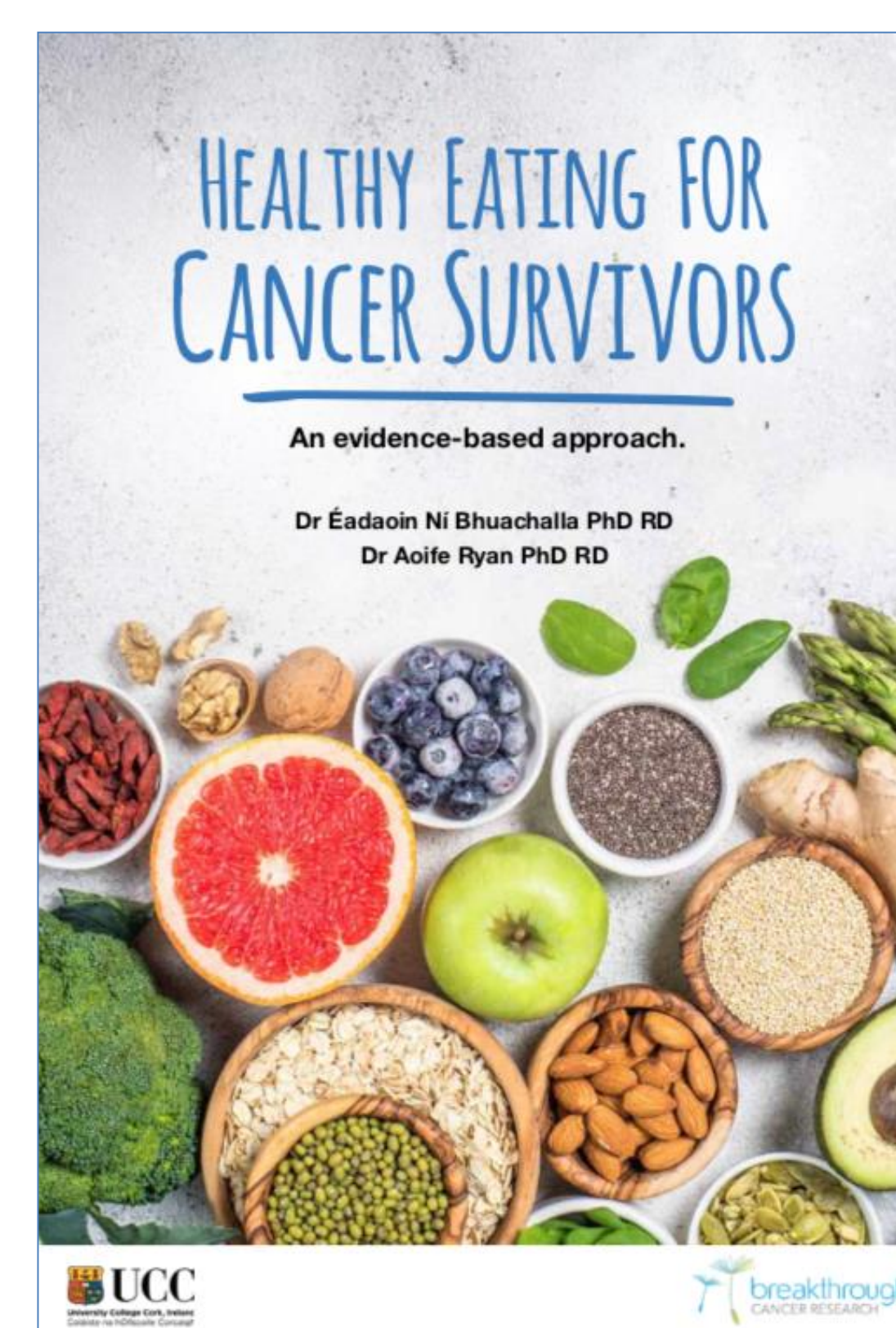


Fig 2: Healthy Eating for Cancer Survivors: An Evidence-Based Approach

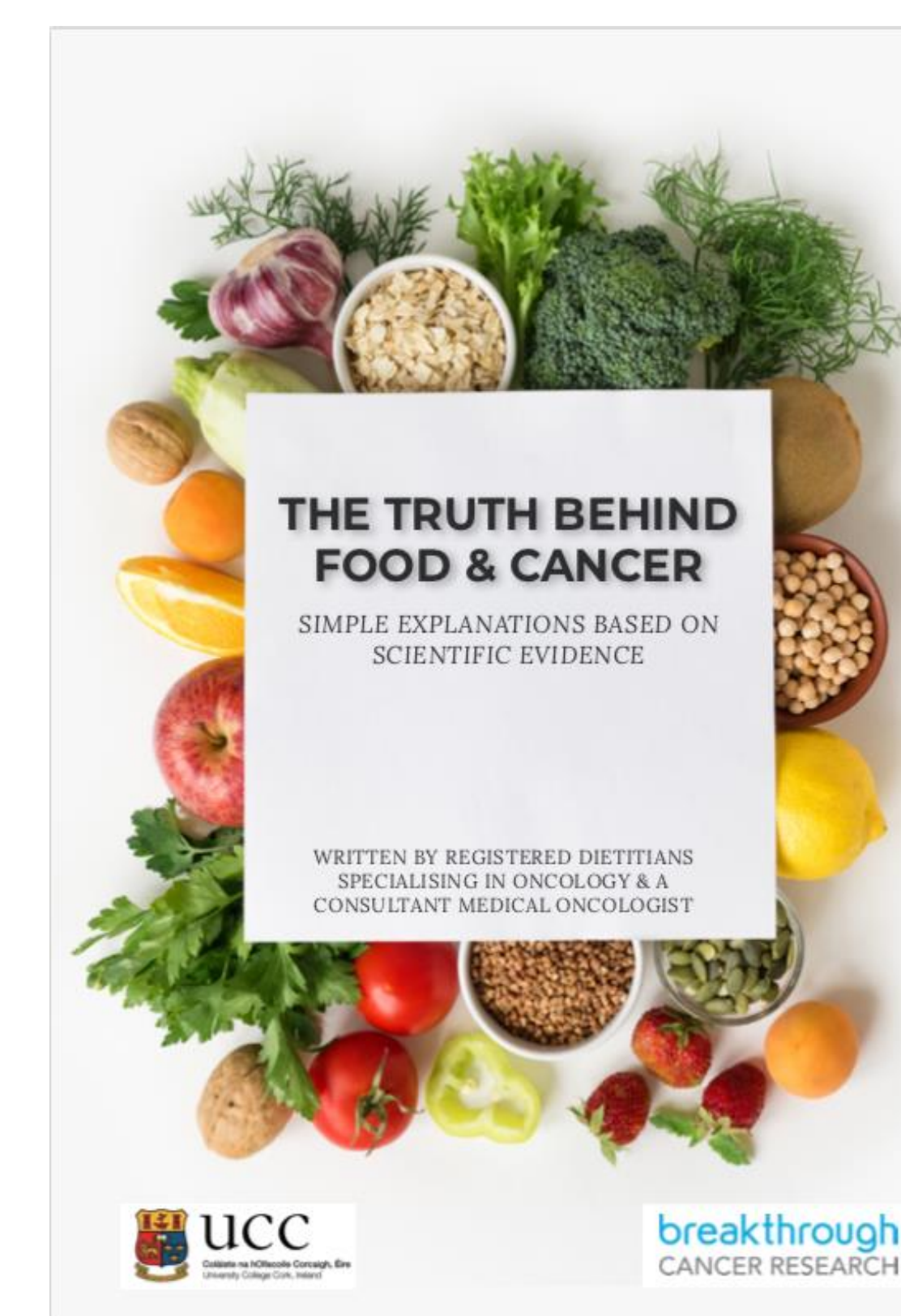


Fig 3: The Truth Behind Food and Cancer. Simple explanations based on scientific evidence.

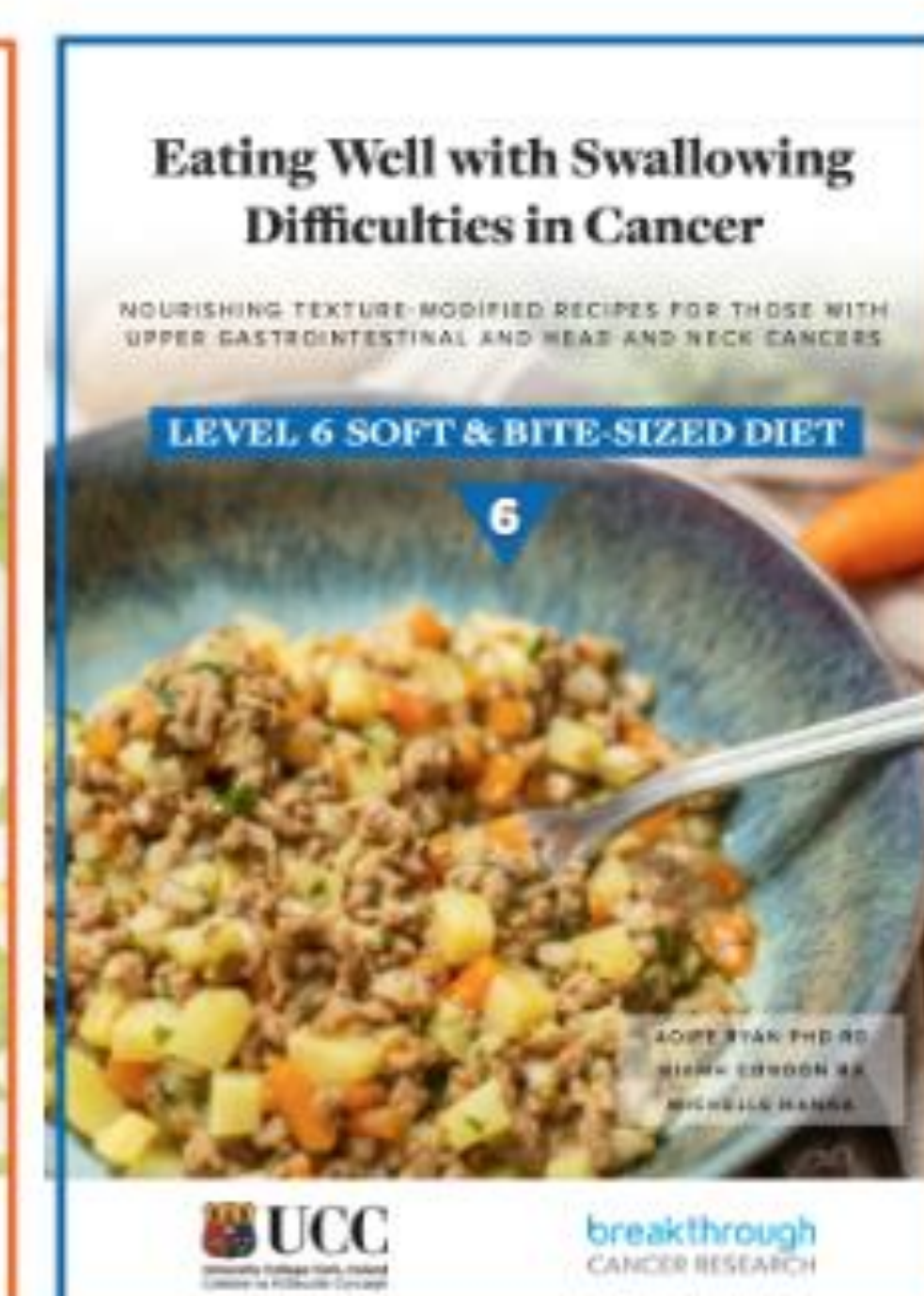
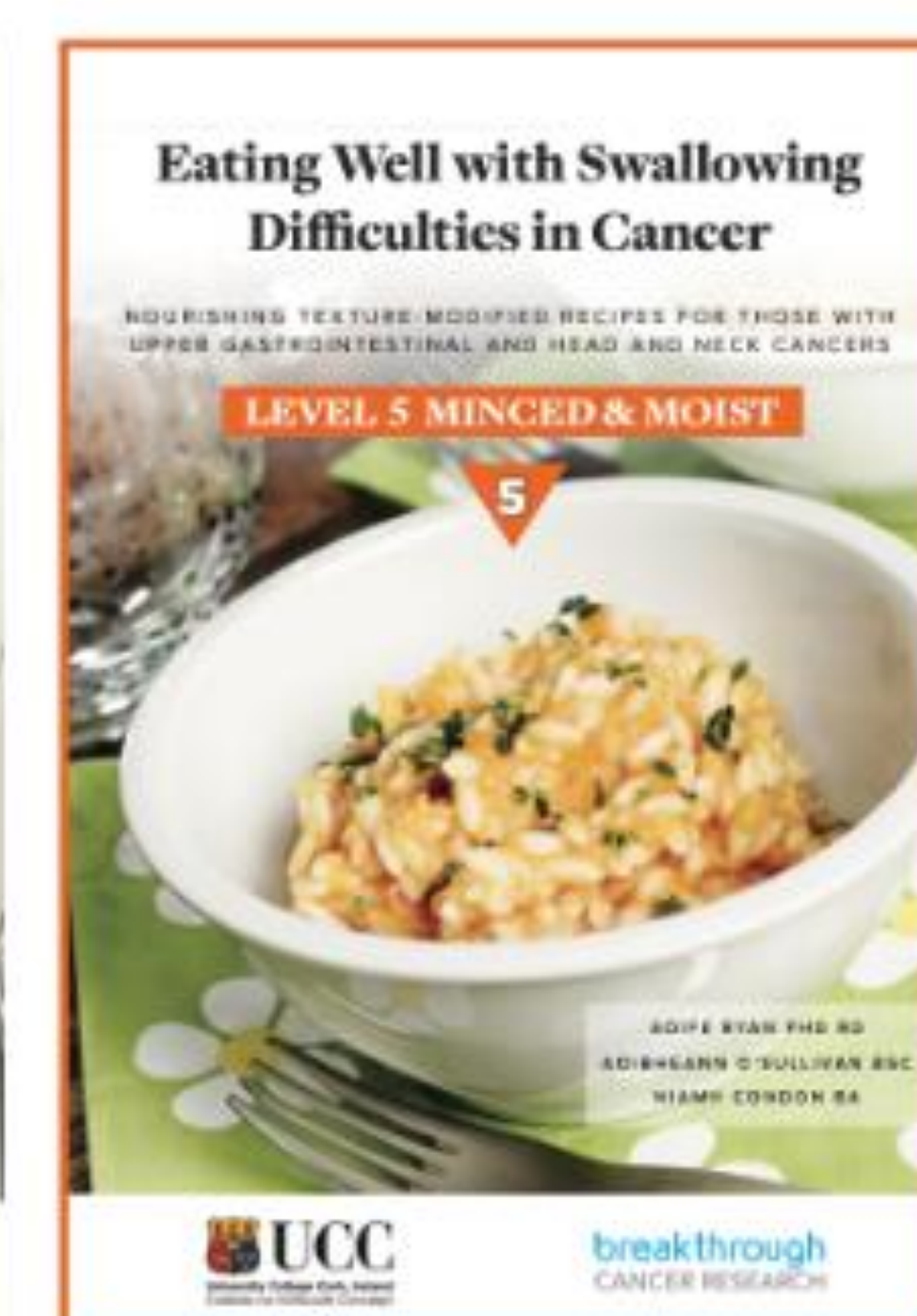
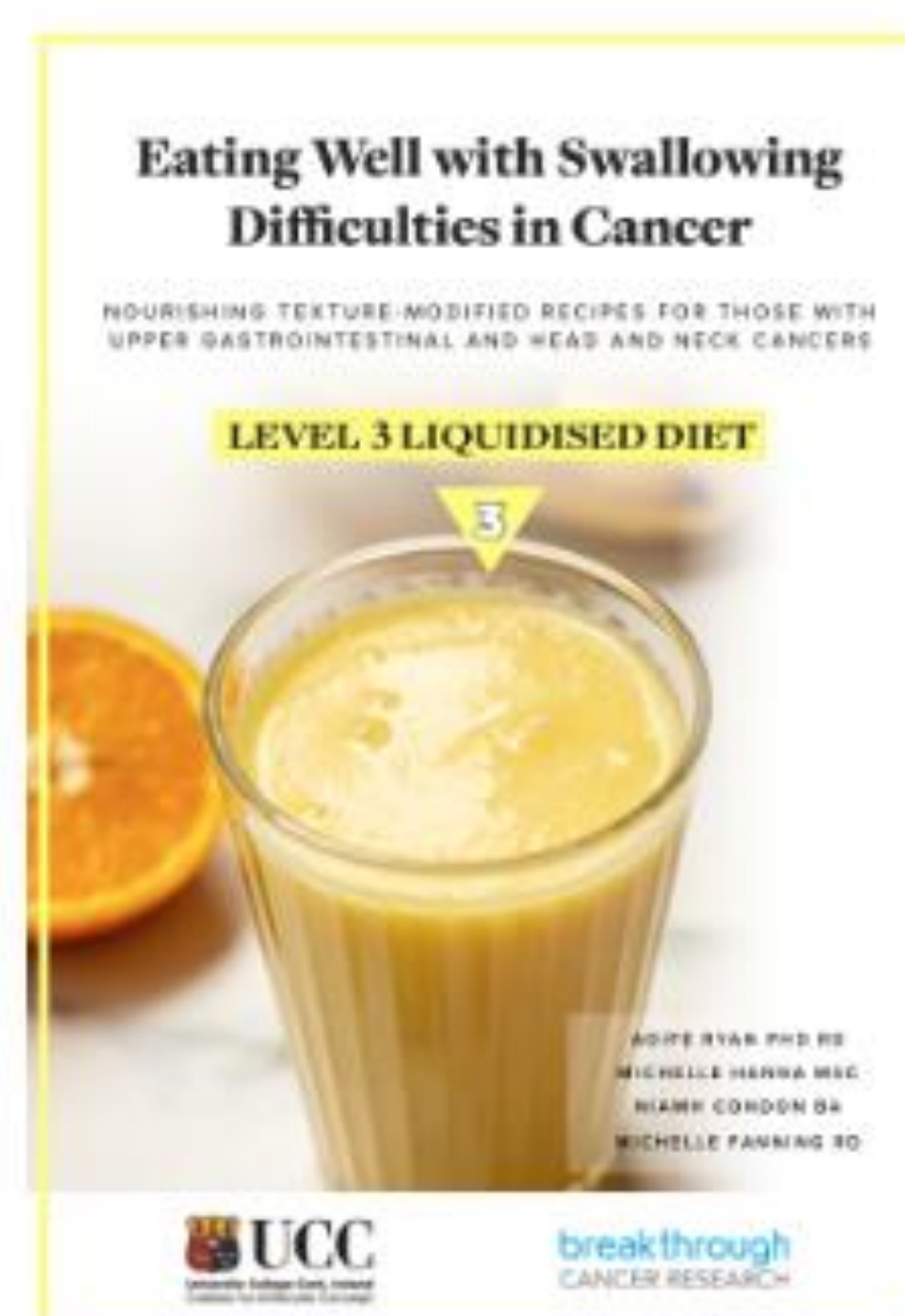


Fig 4: Series of four books entitled: Eating Well with Swallowing Difficulties in Cancer: Level 3 Liquidised, Level 4 Puréed, Level 5 Minced & Moist and Level 6 Soft and Bite Sized.

Conclusion

A food-first approach is favoured by cancer patients. The development of this series of free cookbooks provides dietitians, patients and carers with valuable educational tools to meet nutritional requirements in those that are malnourished/anorectic/dysphagic or in a positive energy balance.