

Care causing diagnosis, comorbidities and nutritional status of patients in continuous long term care unit

M Marques¹, V Gonçalves², A Vieira², F Magalhães², J Godinho¹, A Lemos^{1,3}, V Costa¹, A Faria²

¹Hospital de Santa Cecília, Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Alvaizere, Portugal

²ESTeSC - Coimbra Health School, Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra, Portugal

³Centro Hospitalar e Universitário de Coimbra, Portugal

Introduction:

Poor nutritional status has negative implications on prognosis, cost of care, morbidity and mortality. However, when nutritional assessment is not implemented, malnutrition can go untreated.

Objectives:

The aim of this study was to establish a relationship between care causing diagnosis, existing comorbidities and nutritional status of patients admitted to a long-term care unit.

Methods:

In the context of Nutrition Day audit, from 2016 to 2018, nutritional status was assessed using Mini Nutritional Assessment. Sociodemographic and anthropometric data, as well as medical history were collected.

Results:

Sixty-two individuals were included (51.6% male), with a mean age of 77±11 years. Mean BMI was 22.9±4.3 kg/m². Most of the patients were bedridden or in wheelchair (51.6%). A great part of the sample was at risk of malnutrition (40.3%) and 27.4% was malnourished. The majority of the sample showed dementia (75.8%) and 66.2% had depression. A correlation was found between nutritional status and cognitive status ($r = 0.445$; $p = 0.000$); and between nutritional status and functional capacity ($r = 0.284$; $p = 0.025$). Care causing diagnosis for most of the patients was central nervous system disease (66.1%), followed by heart disease (59.7%), skeletal muscle disease (30.6%) and cancer (17.7%). An association was found between heart disease and malnutrition ($p = 0.023$). Almost all of the sample was polymedicated (91.9%) and most was taking antipsychotics and/or neuroleptics (71.0%).

Conclusions:

In this long-term care unit, malnutrition presented a significant prevalence. Cognitive status decline and low functional capacity seem to be correlated with a worse nutritional status. Also, heart disease was associated with malnutrition, meaning that these are significant risk factors for the development of malnutrition. Nutrition Day audit brings awareness to the importance of nutritional care, as well as the need for development of nutritional screening and assessment protocols.