

Screening and Assessment of Undernutrition: Impact on Hospital Funding

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Introduction: Disease-related undernutrition is a health care concern which remains under-recognized and under-treated. The absence of routine screening at hospital admission is one of the main reasons for this perennial problem. In order to implement undernutrition screening and nutritional treatment, it is important to evaluate the economic impact of undernutrition documentation held in medical records.

Aims: To assess the financial benefits of systematically screening and assessing patients at hospital admission and their documentation in clinical notes.

Methods: Systematic screening and diagnosis of undernutrition in patients consecutively admitted in oncology and multidisciplinary departments of an oncology hospital was performed using the Patient-Generated Subjective Global Assessment [1]. The diagnosis of undernutrition was documented in the clinical process and was considered for the codification of Diagnosis Related Groups (DRG) [2]. A test including undernutrition co-morbidity was carried out. Relative weight and price of DRGs with and without undernutrition were assessed [3].

Results: Forty-seven patients were evaluated, of those, 23 (48.9%) were undernourished. Only three of the aforementioned patients accounted for an increase in total hospital funding which came to €9,006.

Conclusions: The documentation of undernutrition in the clinical record had a relevant economic impact. This justified the resources implicated in the practice of routine screening of undernutrition and nutritional therapy with the aim of improving nutritional status in hospital patients.

References:

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