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Acceptability study on Nutricomp® Drink Plus in adult patients: Evaluation of gastrointestinal (GI) tolerance, palatability and compliance

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Malnutrition is common in hospitalised patients. It can influence morbidity and mortality, as well as recovery time and hospital length of stay. For patients with functioning gastrointestinal tracts who are unable to meet their energy and nutrient requirements with normal food intake, nutritional support is recommended using oral nutritional supplements (ONS). This study assesses the GI tolerance, palatability and compliance of a new ONS (Nutricomp® Drink Plus, B Braun Melsungen AG). The ONS drinks were initially prescribed in hospital with patients taking the supplements on 7 consecutive days either in a hospital or in the community setting.

This prospective open label study was conducted in a University Teaching Hospital. The recruitment target was 15 patients with inclusion criteria comprising patients who are adults (18 years+) with a MUST score ≥ 1 and an anticipated period of nutritional support $\geq$ 7 days. Each patient tasted all 4 flavours (vanilla, strawberry, chocolate, banana) of Nutricomp® Drink Plus, completing a palatability questionnaire for each. The patients took the Investigational Product (IP) for a period of 7 days. A patient diary that documented IP daily intake, GI tolerance parameters and compliance was completed for each patient for this 7 day period.

Of the 23 patients that provided informed consent most were hospitalised due to oncological treatment (56.5%, of which approximately half had underlying malignant disease of the gastrointestinal tract, liver or spleen) or maxillary osteostomy (21.7%). 15 patients successfully completed the study by taking the prescribed IP for 7 consecutive days. 8 patients did not complete the study according to the protocol. Nutricomp® Drink Plus showed mostly 'good' to 'very good', but at least 'acceptable' results concerning the several acceptability parameters evaluated including colour, smell, texture, taste and overall acceptance of the product. 26 gastrointestinal adverse events were documented in 10 of 23 patients, none of which were considered to be serious, judged as being related to the IP or led to discontinuation of the IP. The calculated overall compliance was 93.8% (SD 30.7) and Nutricomp® Drink Plus was judged as acceptable by 94.4% of all patients. For the 15 patients that competed the study, calculated compliance was 100% (SD 27.6%) for the total treatment period. All of these 15 patients also confirmed that they would continue using Nutricomp® Drink Plus if necessary and would recommend Nutricomp® Drink Plus to other people in need of an ONS.

This is the first UK study to evaluate Nutricomp® Drink Plus, demonstrating good tolerability, acceptability, safety profile and compliance. No adverse events relating to Nutricomp Drink plus were reported during the study. Nutricomp® Drink Plus was shown to be acceptable, palatable and well tolerated in patients with a generally reduced health status or a vulnerable/ pre-damaged GI system.