

The prevalence of sarcopenia in covid-19 patients

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Background and aims

The recent clinical and care experience of hospitalized patients affected by SARS-CoV-2 infection has highlighted the essential role of rehabilitation and multidisciplinary management, as a fundamental step for clinical-functional recovery. Hospitalization and prolonged hospitalization, often mandatory as a result of the complications of SARS-CoV-2 infection, generate worsening health, muscle function decrease and sarcopenia which increase the risk of malnutrition. The purpose of this study was to detect the prevalence of sarcopenia in patients admitted to the COVID Rehabilitation Department of the IRCCS San Raffaele Hospital in Milan

Methods

The population consisted of SARS-CoV-2 patients hospitalized from March 2020 to February 2021. Sarcopenia was diagnosed during the nutritional assessment following the algorithm suggested by EWGSOP2.

Results

43 patients, 53 females and 86 males with a mean age of 69.8 years, were evaluated for sarcopenia. 46.9% of the sample (67 out of 143 patients) had a confirmed sarcopenia condition, showing loss of strength detected by hand grip test and muscle mass detected by bioimpedance, 35% (50 patients out of the total) reported only loss of strength and therefore showed a condition of probable sarcopenia and finally, only 18.2% of hospitalized patients (26 of the total), did not appear to be sarcopenic.

Conclusions

Sarcopenia is a reversible condition, since motor rehabilitation and nutritional therapies can reduce the percentage of subjects affected.

This study demonstrates how the assessment of sarcopenia in SARS-CoV-2 patients is a relevant factor in setting up an adequate therapeutic-nutritional intervention.