



NUTRITIONAL CARE OF SEVERELY MALNOURISHED PATIENTS AT THE ASST SANTI PAOLO E CARLO NUTRITION OUTPATIENT CLINIC FOR ONCOLOGIC PATIENTS

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Background and aims

Nutritional status is important for cancer patients in terms of survival, quality of life, cancer treatments' tolerance. This study shows the results of the first 6-8 months of activity of the newly set-up Nutrition Outpatient Clinic for oncologic patients at ASST Santi Paolo e Carlo.

Methods

Over the period October 2021-June 2022, 75 severely malnourished oncologic patients (F37,M38, mean age 69.5 ± 10.9 yrs), have been evaluated at the Nutrition Outpatient Clinic: 51 gastro-intestinal tract, 3 head-and-neck, 21 other cancer diagnoses (lung-lymphoma-leukaemia-bladder-liver).

A combined assessment (MD nutrition specialist-dietitian) was performed at T0 with re-evaluations at 2(T1) and 5(T2) months. Collected data: weight/BMI loss, oral nutritional intakes versus target, blood proteins, oncological therapies/surgeries, side effects, comorbidities. Interventions consisted in dietary counselling with prescription of personalized hypercaloric diets and/or oral nutritional supplements-ONSs (liquid/pudding/powder).

Statistical Analysis: 2-tailed Student T test, R correlation coefficient (Excel11)

Results

At T0- mean weight: 55.7 ± 7 kg/BMI 21 ± 4 kg/m², mean weight loss vs usual: -14.0 kg (± 8.6 kg), nutritional intakes' deficit: -300 kcal/day, proteins -26 gr/day, total blood proteins 6.3 ± 0.8 gr/dl, albumin 3.4 ± 0.6 gr/dl.

A significant mean increase ($p < 0.001$) in energy-protein intakes was observed at T1 (59pts: $+263 \pm 312$ kcal, $+22 \pm 18$ gr proteins) and T2 (36pts: $+346 \pm 416$ kcal, $+27 \pm 18$ gr proteins). Body weight/BMI and blood parameters remained stable. Positive significant correlations ($p < 0.001$) were observed at T1 (R 0.76) and T2 (R 0.83), between total oral intakes (diet+ONS) and solely dietary food intakes. No patient discontinued cancer treatments because of worsening of nutritional status.

Conclusions

Despite the small sample size, results are encouraging. Weight stabilization and intakes optimization through targeted dietary counselling are among the main goals of nutrition intervention in cancer patients.

