QuaLife+: Screening of malnutrition in the elderly population in a university-central hospital in the North of Portugal

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Rationale

Nowadays, 20% of the Portuguese population are 65 or more years old, and this number tends to increase. The prevalence of malnutrition in elderly is 1-5% in community and 20-50% in the hospitalized, being associated with an increase in hospitalization duration, costs and mortality. The QuaLife+ Project, financed by Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein through EEA Grants, allows the assessment and monitoring of the nutritional risk in the elderly hospitalized in CHSJ.

Methods

It was evaluated the nutritional risk of the hospitalized patients in CHSJ who are 65 or more years old, between November 2015 and July 2016. The nutritional risk screening is performed by nurses on admission (first 48h) through Mini Nutritional Assessment – Short Form (MNA-SF), generating an automatic alert to the nutrition team when risk is detected. Then, nutritional assessment and intervention take place. To become the screening practices more uniform, staff formation occurred in the implementation period. The sample methodology is described in graphic 1. It was used descriptive statistics to the definition of the sample, and Chi-square to find out if there are differences on the proportion of men and women in each nutritional state, and if there are differences on the proportion of patients classified in each nutritional state between screened and assessed. Mann-Whitney test was used to verify if there are differences on the median of age.

Objective

To monitor the nutritional status of the elderly in CHSJ and to define the type of nutritional intervention.

Preliminary results

Screening results on admission may be observed in graphic 2.

The association of MNA-SF with sex and age is described in table 1.

The probability of being at risk of undernutrition on undernourished is higher in women comparing to men. Regarding age, older patients have higher risk of undernutrition or undernutrition.

Conclusion

Screening results point to more than 1/3 of admitted patients at undernutrition risk and about 1/5 undernourished; after nutritional assessment, most of them were undernourished. We assessed a hospital malnutrition prevalence that matches the one described in the literature. Older elderly, in particular women, have higher risk of malnutrition.

Acknowledgment

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References

XV census of the portuguese population – 2011 (Statistics National Institute)