FIGHTING HOSPITAL MALNUTRITION IN SPAIN: FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION
A project of the Spanish Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (SENPE)

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The burden of hospital malnutrition in Spain

A nationwide, cross-sectional study aimed to estimate the prevalence and costs of hospital malnutrition in Spain (PREDyCES study**).

STUDY RESULTS AND MAIN FINDINGS

- A random sample of 31 hospitals representative of the Spanish National Health System stratified by complexity and size (number of beds).
- 1707 patients included in the prevalence of malnutrition analysis.
- 470 patients included in the cost of malnutrition analysis.
- 23% patients showed a NRS score ≥ 3

Malnutrition was specially high in older patients hospitalised for medical conditions (cancers, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases).

- Malnourished patients showed a longer length of stay (3 to 4 days more than non-malnourished patients), higher incidence of complications and hospital costs.

Patients that developed malnutrition during hospitalisation showed the biggest additional cost respect to non-malnourished patients (3,129 € vs 5,821 € resp.).

ACTION PLAN (initiated in 2010)

- To present the results of the PREDyCES study to central (Ministry of Health) and regional health authorities to improve the awareness and decision making in relation to hospital malnutrition in the National Health System.
- To design and carry out a study to evaluate the clinical and economic impact of a post-discharge nutritional intervention in hospitalised malnourished patients (PREDyCES-2).
- To implement and launch a mandatory malnutrition screening test to be included as part of the new model of clinical record in Spain, prepared by the Spanish Society of Medical Documentation (SEDOM).
- To prepare a “Consensus paper: position statements to fight against hospital malnutrition” endorsed by several medical and scientific Spanish societies. This paper should define recommendations and strategies to improve the universal screening and management of hospital malnutrition from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- To award an annual grant for the best hospital nutrition unit. This award will recognize every year a different clinical nutrition unit fulfilling the quality indicators previously defined by SENPE.

Current burden of hospital malnutrition was assessed at a national level with the PREDyCES study: one fourth of hospitalised patients are malnourished in Spain, and they are associated to a 50% additional cost.

Main findings of the study where used to define the action plan to fight against hospital malnutrition in Spain.

Most of the planned actions have already been launched in 2010 and will be re-assessed during 2011.

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