Abstract

Malnutrition is commonly associated with head and neck cancer, due especially to anorexia, which is aggravated by radiotherapy. The objective of this study was to evaluate modifications to nutritional ingestion following three types of nutritional intervention. Sixty-four male out-patients (62.1 ± 1.5 years) were divided into three groups: oral group, (n = 32) that received an adapted oral diet; feeding tube group, (n = 16) under home enteral nutrition via a nasoenteral feeding tube (6x/day); and supplement group, (n = 16) with oral diet associated to oral alimentary supplement between meals (3x/day). The groups were homogeneous and counseled to maintain a caloric ingestion of 40 kcal/kg. The diet for the oral group was adapted to the age and to the side effects of radiotherapy The nutritional state of the three groups was evaluated for the caloric proteic ingestion, anthropometric indicators (body weight, body mass index, triceps skinfold thickness, midarm muscle area), laboratorial indicators (total proteins, albumin, hematocrit, hemoglobin and total lymphocytes count). The results showed that all of the groups presented an increase in the ingestion of calories and proteins (p < 0.001). Conclusions: 1. the nutritional therapy support for patients with head and neck cancer under radiotherapy, whether exclusive oral diet, enteral through a feeding tube, or with alimentary supplement associated to an oral diet achieved a significant increase in the total caloric ingestion. It is recommended that programs be implemented to improve the ingestion of foods among these patients.

Keywords