Abstract

There is no consensus on the best method to assess the nutritional status of hospitalized adults although many methods are available. This study evaluated the prevalence of malnutrition in adults at different times of hospitalization (admission, 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days) in two years (2002 and 2006). All patients were submitted to anthropometric assessment, Subjective Global Assessment (SGA), determination of serum albumin, and lymphocyte count. There were no differences in prevalence of malnutrition between the years of assessment, but great variability was found when different methods were used. An increase in malnutrition was detected when the diagnostic criterion was the total count of lymphocytes, while a decrease was detected in the case of the Body Mass Index (BMI). In both years, the increase in malnutrition was not statistically significant over the weeks of hospitalization. Over the years, malnutrition remains an important health problem of hospitalized adults, requiring appropriate diagnosis and management. Each institution is recommended to adopt one or more appropriate methods of nutritional assessment, which have been validated for the population under their care.

Keywords

Malnutrition, Nutritional assessment, Weight loss, Hospitalization.