Abstract

The dietary intake of cancer patients can affect their nutritional status. Objectives: To assess the dietary intake and nutritional status of head and neck cancer patients on radiotherapy. Methods: 24-hour recalls and anthropometric measures were taken during the first and third weeks of radiotherapy. Results: Of the 62 patients, significant reductions were found in arm muscle area (p = 0.001) and arm muscle circumference (p < 0.001), and 69% of patients had an average weight loss of 5.7% in three weeks. With regards to their dietary intake, reductions were found in energy (26.5 kcal/kg/d-21.3 kcal/kg/d, p < 0.001), carbohydrate (196.9 g/d – 180.5 g/d, p = 0.020), protein (1.19 g/kg/d-0.93 g/kg/d, p = 0.009) and fat (44.4 g/d-33.1 g/d, p < 0.001) intakes during the study period. Discussion: The changes that result from cancer radiotherapy led to reductions in dietary intake and negatively affected body composition measures.

Keywords

Nutritional status, Radiation therapy, Head and neck cancer.