Objectives: According to the Brazilian Hospital Nutritional Assessment Inquiry, malnutrition in hospitals reaches 48.1% in Brazil, with this figure reaching as high as 63.9% in the northern and northeastern regions of the country. Despite its high prevalence, hospital malnutrition is not well identified by the majority of professionals on healthcare teams. The aim of the present study was to identify nutritional risk in patients hospitalized for clinical conditions. Method: This study was conducted at a university hospital in northeastern Brazil. Data were collected using the NRS 2002 screening tool (score 3 for nutritional risk) within 48 hours after admission to hospital. Results: Ninety-nine patients (44.4% men and 55.6% women; 58.6% elderly individuals and 41.4%) were studied between April and October 2010. Nutritional risk was identified in 39.4% upon admission to hospital. Reduced food intake and body mass index were associated with nutritional risk. Conclusions: A high percentage of clinical patients were at nutritional risk, which corroborates findings described in the literature. Low food intake was associated with nutritional risk. These results underscore the importance of nutritional care upon admission to hospital, which can contribute to improving or maintaining nutritional status and the avoidance of complications throughout the hospitalization period.

Keywords