Abstract

Introduction: Malnutrition is a cause for concern among many admitted elderly patients, being common at hospital admission and discharge. Objectives: The objective of this study was to assess if diet enrichment with small servings of energy and protein dense foods, improves energy and nutrient intake in elderly patients at risk of malnutrition discharged to home. Methods: This was a retrospective case series study in elderly patients at risk of malnutrition treated with diet enrichment. There was a data review of dietary and health records of elderly patients discharged to home. Forty-one patients, mean age of 83 ± 5 years, met the inclusion criteria; 13 patients had been lost after 4 weeks of treatment and a total of 24 patients after 12 weeks. Records contained food intake data assessed at baseline, and after 4 and 12 weeks of treatment. Mini Nutritional Assessment, anthropometric measurements, routine biochemical parameters and the Barthel Index were assessed at baseline and after 12 weeks. Results: Compared to baseline, patients significantly improved their energy and protein intake after 4 weeks of treatment, fulfilling the mean nutritional requirements. The improvement in energy and protein intake was still manifest at week 12. After 12 weeks of dietary enrichment, a significant weight gain was observed (4.1%, p = 0.011), as well. No significant changes were detected in functional status. Conclusions: Using small servings of energy and protein dense foods to enrich meals seems a feasible nutritional treatment to increase energy and protein intake and meet nutritional goals among elderly patients discharged to home.

Keywords

Key words, Activities of daily living, Aged, Aged 80 and over, Diet therapy, Malnutrition, Nutritional status.