Abstract

The high prevalence of malnutrition in the growing population of older adults makes malnutrition screening critical, especially in hospitalized elderly patients. The aim of our study was to evaluate the use of the MNA® Mini Nutritional Assessment in hospitalized older adults for rapid evaluation of nutritional risk. A prospective cohort study was made of 106 patients 65 years old or older admitted to an internal medicine ward of a tertiary-care teaching hospital to evaluate the use of the short form, or screening phase, of the MNA-SF. In the first 48 hours of admission, the full MNA questionnaire was administered and laboratory tests and a dermatologic evaluation were made. The MNA score showed that 77% of the patients were at risk of malnutrition or were frankly malnourished. Low blood levels of albumin, cholesterol and vitamins A and D showed a statistically significant association with malnutrition or risk of malnutrition. Separate evaluation of the MNA-SF showed that it was accurate, sensitive and had predictive value for the screening process. Routine use of the MNA-SF questionnaire by admission nurses to screen patients is recommended. Patients with MNA-SF scores of 11 or lower should be specifically assessed by the nutritional intervention team.

Keywords