

Detecting Malnutrition



A re-audit of malnutrition screening by Nutrition and Food Services Dietitians at Waitakere Hospital

Introduction

- ★ Malnutrition is common in hospitalised patients
- ★ The use of a validated nutrition screening tool can be an effective method of detecting and preventing malnutrition
- ★ Results from a Waitemata District Health Board (WDHB) audit completed in 2006 indicated poor screening rates and 52% of patients at risk of malnutrition received no nutrition interventions
- ★ In 2007 Nutrition and Food Services launched a malnutrition screening form completed by ward staff in the Medical and Assessment, Treatment and Rehabilitation (AT&R) wards at Waitakere Hospital (WTH)

Objectives

- ★ To find out whether the malnutrition screening form is completed
- ★ To find out whether patients at risk of malnutrition currently receive appropriate nutrition interventions

Methods

- ★ All patients admitted over a two week period to the Medical and AT&R wards at WTH and who stayed for 48 hours or more were included in the audit
- ★ The only exclusion criterion was imminent death
- ★ Forty eight hours or more after admission the auditor assessed completion of the malnutrition screening form and whether any nutrition interventions had been implemented by ward staff (eg changes to menu codes, starting food records or referral to the Dietitian)
- ★ Each patient's malnutrition screening score was calculated
- ★ A standard audit form was used to collect data. Data was entered into a database and results were reported as descriptive percentages

Outcome measures

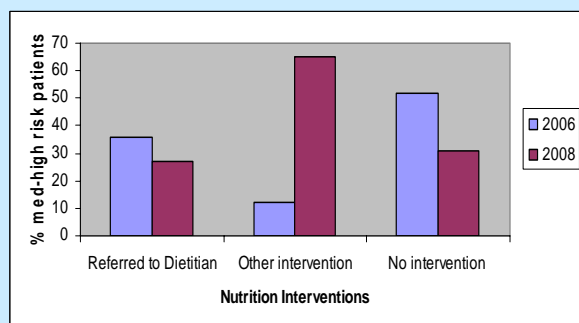
- ★ Completion of the malnutrition screening form
- ★ Risk of malnutrition (malnutrition screening score) of patients
- ★ Patients at risk of malnutrition receiving nutrition interventions initiated by ward staff

Results

Table 1: Screening and Malnutrition Rates

Admissions during audit		2006	2008
Completion of screening	Overall	1%	20%
	Medical wards		14%
	AT&R wards		58%
Low risk of malnutrition		72%	78%
Medium risk of malnutrition		15%	15%
High risk of malnutrition		13%	7%

Figure 1: Nutrition Interventions for those 'At Risk'



- ★ 122 patients were screened in the 2008 re-audit
- ★ Overall 20% of malnutrition screening forms were completed - 14% of patients admitted to Medical wards and 58% admitted to AT&R wards (Table 1)
- ★ 22% of patients admitted were at medium (15%) or high (7%) risk of malnutrition (Table 1)
- ★ Of the patients identified at medium or high risk, 27% were referred to a Dietitian, 65% received another form of nutrition intervention and 31% did not receive any form of nutrition intervention (Figure 1)
- ★ 2008 results indicate more patients at medium or high risk of malnutrition are receiving nutrition interventions and less patients are receiving no nutrition interventions compared to 2006 results

Conclusions

Implementation of the malnutrition screening form has improved detection of malnourished inpatients at WTH and has empowered ward staff to initiate appropriate nutrition interventions.

Aiming for higher screening rates will further improve patient care and ensure that more inpatients at WTH receive appropriate nutrition interventions during their hospital stay.