



NUTRITIONAL STATUS AND EARLY MANAGEMENT OF PATIENTS WITH PANCREATIC CANCER

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Background and aims

Pancreatic cancer is an aggressive malignancy with a poor prognosis. Patients with pancreatic cancer are often malnourished presenting unintentional weight loss at the time of diagnosis as the disease itself has an adverse impact on the nutritional status of patients along with the side effects of CT and RT.

Methods

Patients with pancreatic cancer at first access to our Nutrition Service (NS) receive a complete nutritional assessment and evaluation of nutrition support. We analyzed BMI and weight loss of pancreatic cancer patients at first access to our NS from 2018 onwards, according to pre or post treatment status (CT ± RT ± Surgery).

Results

From 2018 to July 2022 n° 628 new oncological patients accessed our NS, n. 63 patients with pancreatic cancer : n. 37 (58,7%) accessed in pre-treatment conditions (PRE) and 26 (41,3%) having undergone a previous treatment (POST).

Mean age was 74 for PRE and 73 POST. Mean BMI was 23,6 kg/m² (SD ± 4,0) PRE and 22,3 kg/m² (SD ± 4,0) POST. The majority of patients have experienced weight loss > 10 % (80,9 %). Mean BMI and mean weight loss do not differ between PRE and POST, whereas there are notable differences among weight loss distribution and POST patients seem to experience greater weight loss (Table 1).

At nutritional support evaluation 59,5 % of PRE were prescribed parenteral nutrition (PN) and 53,8 % of POST oral nutritional supplements (ONS).

Conclusions

In our experience, patients with pancreatic cancer often access our NS already with a mild to moderate degree of malnutrition before undergoing treatments and a moderate to severe degree of malnutrition when previously treated.

Early nutritional support is fundamental in prevention of potential worsening of nutritional status in patients with pancreatic cancer.

	Pre-treatment	SD / %	Post-treatment (CT±RT±Surgery)	SD / %
n.	37	58,7 %	26	41,3 %
Age, mean	71,8	± 9,0	71	± 9,4
BMI, mean	23,6	± 4,0	22,3	± 4,0
n.		%	n.	%
BMI < 18,5	5	13,5 %	2	7,7 %
BMI 18,5 – 24,9	19	51,4 %	17	65,4 %
BMI ≥ 25	13	35,1 %	7	26,9 %
Weight loss	Yes	No	Yes	No
Weight loss, mean	29	8	22	4
	- 10,9 %		- 12,7 %	
n.		%	n.	%
Weight loss 0 - 5 %	12	32,4 %	4	15,4 %
Weight loss 5 - 10 %	5	13,5 %	6	23,1 %
Weight loss 11 - 20 %	16	43,2 %	9	34,6 %
Weight loss ≥ 20 %	4	10,8 %	7	26,9 %
n.		%	n.	%
ONS	9	24,3 %	14	53,8 %
NE	1	2,7 %	0	0,0 %
PN	22	59,5 %	5	19,2 %

Table 1.

