Cancer care: why nutrition matters

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Medical Nutrition
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Malnutrition in cancer patients leads to poorer health outcomes. It also results in an increased burden to healthcare resources.
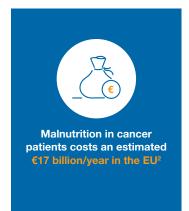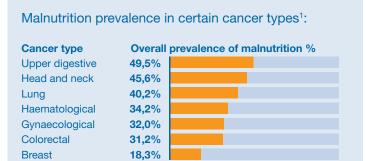**Nutritional care should be an integral part of cancer care.**

Cancer patients are at higher risk of malnutrition:
1 in 3 cancer patients are malnourished[1]

Malnutrition in cancer patients costs an estimated €17 billion/year in the EU[2]

Malnutrition prevalence in certain cancer types[1]:

Cancer type	Overall prevalence of malnutrition %
Upper digestive	49,5%
Head and neck	45,6%
Lung	40,2%
Haematological	34,2%
Gynaecological	32,0%
Colorectal	31,2%
Breast	18,3%

What are the consequences of malnutrition for cancer patients?

Muscle loss

Increased toxicity from chemotherapy

Reduced tolerance to anticancer therapy

Reduced independence and quality of life

Higher complications and risk of infections

Longer hospital stay greater than 3 days[3]

Increased mortality

Good nutritional care can deliver better health outcomes and save costs[1]

Weight gain or maintenance

Decreased interruption rate of oncology therapy

Improved response to anticancer therapy

Nutritional interventions allow for cost savings to the healthcare systems

MNI RECOMMENDATIONS

Screen and monitor cancer patients for malnutrition to provide timely nutritional care

Implement clinical guidelines on nutritional care for cancer patients

Provide equal access to and reimbursement of medical nutrition to cancer patients

Implement multidisciplinary teams in oncology including a dietitian or nutritionist

Educate healthcare professionals and patient advocates, and inform cancer patients on the importance of nutritional care

[1] "Better care through better nutrition: value and effects of medical nutrition - A summary of the evidence base"
https://medicalnutritionindustry.com/files/user_upload/documents/medical_nutrition/2018_MNI_Dossier_Final_web.pdf

[2] "The economic costs of disease related malnutrition" Freijer, Karen et al. (Clinical Nutrition, Volume 32, Issue 1, 136 – 141)
https://www.clinicalnutritionjournal.com/article/S0261-5614(12)00132-X/fulltext

[3] "The economic cost of hospital malnutrition in Europe; a narrative review" Khalatbari-Soltani, Saman et al. (Clinical Nutrition ESPEN, Volume 10, Issue 3, e89 - e94)
https://clinicalnutritionespen.com/article/S2405-4577(15)00097-2/pdf

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