AN AUDIT TO EVALUATE THE USE OF NUTRITION SCREENING TOOL IN SPINAL INJURED PATIENTS

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Background

Malnutrition is common in hospitalised adults and it is associated with adverse hospital outcomes. Patients admitted to hospital should be routinely screened and monitored regularly (NICE, 2006). The Spinal Nutrition Screening Tool (SNST) (Bearne, 2000) has been used for nutrition screening since 2004. Little is known about the use of nutrition screening tool in the NSIC.

Aims

➢ To assess the current use of SNST.
➢ To record the body mass index (BMI), albumin level and food intake by food record chart

Methods

This audit was conducted during May and June 2008, in the NSIC. The medical and nursing notes of 81 patients aged between 18 - 80 yrs old, who had been admitted not less than 72 hours previously, on 5 adult spinal wards were examined by dietitians and nurses. The presence of a correctly completed SNST form recorded. A Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the nutritional state with BMI and albumin level.

Results

A completed MUST form was present in 60.4% (49) of patient’s records.
47% of patients were found at risk of undernutrition, of these 8.2 % were at high risk of undernutrition.
40 % of patients were underweight (BMI < 20 Kg/m²)
15 % of patients were found to have a hypoalbuminaemia (Albumin < 30g/L);
25 % of patients were found to have eaten less than half of their meal
Undernourished individuals tended to have a significant lower albumin level (25.5 g/L v 35.5 g/L, \( P = 0.003 \)) but no difference were found in BMI (22.3 Kg/m² v 22.2 Kg/m², \( P =0.68 \))

Discussion

Present audit found the compliance of nutrition screening is low and varies between wards. The introduction of training on the use of MUST for all clinical staff in the NSIC is proposed and training is now included as a part of the trust mandatory training. Follow up studies of the prevalence of malnutrition and its clinical outcomes in patients with SCI in UK spinal injuries units are proposed

References

Bearne (2000) Personal communication

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