

NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF ONCOLOGICAL PATIENTS IN PALLIATIVE CARE ADMITTED TO A REFERENCE HOSPITAL IN BELÉM/PA

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Introduction: Palliative care is a comprehensive approach that aims to actively care for all individuals suffering from a serious illness, with the aim of providing quality of life to everyone involved in the pathological process, from early identification to the terminal phase. From a nutritional point of view, early diagnosis of malnutrition in this population is of utmost importance for the initiation of nutritional management, aiming to prevent or minimize weight loss, avoid refractory cachexia, control symptoms and improve quality of life. **Objectives:** To characterize the nutritional status of oncology patients receiving palliative care admitted to a referral hospital in Belém-PA. **Methods:** Descriptive study involving 24 oncology patients in palliative care, admitted to a reference hospital in the North Region of Brazil over a period of 6 months, approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee under CAAE number 77133424.3.0000.5550. To assess nutritional status, the Nutritional Risk Screening - NRS-2002 screening methodology was used, measuring Arm Circumference and Calf Circumference, added to the classification according to the Palliative Performance Scale. **Results:** All patients were at nutritional risk according to the NRS-2002 screening (100%). Of these, 95.8% presented some degree of depletion according to arm circumference and 75% were identified with low muscle mass according to the calf circumference classification. Furthermore, 100% of patients scored below 70% on the Palliative Performance Scale. **Conclusion:** Due to the staging of the pathology, tumor response and effects of antineoplastic treatment, the presence of malnutrition may be recurrent in cancer patients undergoing palliative care, directly reflecting on the degree of functional impairment. Such data demonstrate a worrying reality commonly seen within hospitals that provide palliative care, where patients are admitted with severe nutritional impairment already in place and in a clear process of physical suffering, a fact that goes against the provision of proportional comfort measures. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that an individualized and timely nutritional approach, associated with adequate multidisciplinary treatment, are essential

to detect early signs of malnutrition, contain the progression of the nutritional condition and avoid irreversible complications.

Keywords: Malnutrition; cancer; palliative care.