



Nutritional status in a functional perspective

A study in a cohort of older people in home health care

av

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Abstract

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High age is a risk factor for most acute and chronic diseases, injuries and function disabilities, and hence, an important risk factor for nutritional problems. A great deal of elderly health care in Sweden are performed in the patient's home environment and home health care has been transformed to more advanced medical care the last decades.

The aim of this thesis was to comprehensively describe the nutritional status and its change over time in a population of older people receiving home health care. The aim includes to propose a framework for investigating and analysing the nutritional status in older people.

Nutritional status was studied at enrolment in home health care and regularly followed up for three years. Patients that were 65 years or older and needed home health care for at least three months between 2012 and 2017 were asked to join the study, resulting in 69 participants (64 % women).

Data collection and analysis of the nutritional status was based on the proposed model for assessing the nutritional status in a comprehensive functional perspective (paper 1). The model comprises four domains that affect the nutritional status and functional outcome in a bidirectional way. In paper 2 we concluded that malnutrition, sarcopenia, frailty and dehydration are highly prevalent in the population and the most important indicators were loss of appetite and dehydration. This was confirmed in paper 3, where nutritional status was analysed with a statistical approach. A total of 103 indicators of nutritional status were reduced to 19 that were suggested to be primary investigated. Also, the paper empirically confirmed the relationship within as well as between the domains suggested in paper 1. Finally, we studied meal pattern, being a part of one of the domains (paper 4). We found indications that presence of at least one large meal (high energy intake) per day had more impact on the total daily energy and protein intake than more eating occasions during the day.

Keywords: nutritional status, nutrition, home health care, older people, geriatric, meal pattern, dehydration, appetite.

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