

Malnutrition of the Cancer Patients under Chemotherapy and Influence of Learned Food Aversions

Authors : Hafsa Chergui

Abstract : Malnutrition is a very common problem for hospitalized patients in general but it happens most to those who have a chronic disease such as cancer. Learned food aversions are defined as aversions which form toward foods after their ingestion has been temporally paired with illness (nausea or emesis). Learned food aversion may exert a negative impact on nutritional status and quality of life. The present review evaluates the literature derived both from laboratory animals and humans. Also, a questionnaire has been filled by patients under chemotherapy to assess the level of food aversions. This study evaluated the current research for avoiding the formation of aversions to dietary items in 200 cancer patients treated with chemotherapy. A scapegoat food or beverage can be used just before treatment to reduce the incidence of treatment-related aversions to foods in the individual's usual diet. The goal of this work is to inform the nurses and dieticians because they play a vital role in the daily assessment of the patients' nutritional status. Being aware of all the causes of malnutrition may help to suggest solutions to improve the health condition of the patient and avoid severe malnutrition.

Keywords : chemotherapy, oncology, food aversion, taste aversion

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