

Re-Evaluation of Functional Assessment of Anorexia/Cachexia Therapy (Appetite Scale) with Nutritional Intake of Cancer Patients

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Abstract : Background: Anorexia a common symptom among patients with prolonged illness leading to anorexia-cachexia syndrome with a prevalence rate of 70%. In order to provide effective health care and better response to treatment, appetite should be assessed on admission and then periodically for earlier nutrition intervention. Functional Assessment of Anorexia/Cachexia Therapy (FAACT) appetite scale is 12 questions, patient-rated, symptom specific measure for appetite, and distress from anorexia. It assigns a score ranging from 0 (worst response) to 4 (best response). Therefore, proposing a total score of ≤ 24 may be sufficient to make a diagnosis of anorexia. Objectives: To assess the FAACT scale by co-relating the scores with the Nutritional intake and BMI of Cancer Patients. Methods: The FAACT scores of 100 cancer in-patients receiving chemotherapy or radiation as treatment, their 24-hour calorie and protein intake and BMI were recorded. The data was then statistically analyzed. Results: The calorie and protein intake and FAACT scores both showed a significant positive co-relation ($p < 0.001$), inferring that the patients with a FAACT score of ≤ 24 were not meeting their calorie as well as protein requirements, hence rightly categorizing them as anorexic. The co-relation between BMI and FAACT scores showed a weak co-relation and was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The FAACT scale thus is not sensitive to distinguish patients being under-weight, normal weight or obese. Conclusion: The FAACT scale helps in providing better palliative and nutritional care as it correctly assessed anorexia /cachexia in cancer patients and co-related significantly with their nutrient intake.

Keywords : appetite, cachexia, cancer, malnutrition

Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020