

Abstract

Aging is a complex biological process, which usually is accompanied by changes in socioeconomic status, which may have a great impact on the physical and nutritional status of the elderly. The proportion of the Sri Lankan population aged 60 and over rose from 7 % in 1981 to 10 % in 2001. Decreased food intake and a sedentary lifestyle in the growing numbers of the elderly increased their risk for malnutrition. Therefore, elderly people are more prone to hospitalization. The objective of this study was to assess the nutritional status and nutrient intake of hospitalized elderly men. This study compared the dietary and anthropometric profile of fifty hospitalized elderly men having mean age of 69 years. General questionnaire and two day dietary recall + observation were used to collect information of the subjects. Weight, height, waist, hip, mid upper arm circumference and calf circumference were measured for anthropometric assessments. MNA was used to determine the nutritional status.

The result showed that 48% of patients were malnourished (BMI<19). MNA revealed that 30% patients were malnourished and 63% patients were at risk to be malnourished. About 38% of the elderly patients showed BMI in between 19-23, and 6% of the elderly patients showed BMI between 23-25. Out of whole group 8% of the elderly patients showed BMI higher than 25. The intake of energy, protein, fat, Vitamin D, Vitamin C, Ca and iron were significantly low compared with WHO reference value ($p<0.05$). Energy, protein, CHO, Se, Na intake slightly higher among well nourished patients than other malnourished and at risk groups ($p<0.05$). Length of hospital stay was higher in malnourished group than at risk group and normal group. The most of the patients (72%) had primary education level and income level below than the Rs. 1000 (58%). About 92% of patients had low physical activity. Seventy six percent of the elderly patients showed problem with vision and 68% had problem with chewing. The majority of the population (56%) had asthma, leg/hand pain like disease and 58% patients had moderate appetite.

This study finally conclude that elderly patients admitted to Kuliyaipitiya base hospital are either malnourished or at risk of malnutrition, with the poor nutrient intake when compared to the WHO recommendations. Majority of malnourished patients stay in hospital more than five days.