

Appetite and Dietary Intake in Patients with Cancer: A Challenge

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Patients with cancer are compromised by a variety of symptoms like nausea, vomiting, food aversions, fatigue, dyspnea, pain, change taste (in special when undergoing oncology treatment, the chemotherapy) and changes in appetite which may influence in the dietary intake and manifest as decrease in weigh and body mass index, which can be always a great challenge for professionals and caregivers.

Cancer itself, as example the tumor site and clinical stage, may already be associated with a disturbance of appetite and added to the toxic effects of oncology treatment it may increase the severity and persistence of symptoms and affect directly the dietary intake of patients.

The loss of appetite, the weight loss and decrease the dietary intake are common and troubling characteristics related to patients with cancer, especially to patients with cancer in advanced stages, patients refractory to treatment or patients in palliative care.

Appetite and dietary intake have been pointed out as factors that can have some impact on the quality of life of patients with cancer, which has attracted an increasing interest in recent years.

Several studies suggest that low dietary intake may influence the cancer patients' ability to maintain adequate nutritional status during cancer treatment.

All these conditions may be related and deserve special attention during the treatment and follow-up of cancer patients.

Therefore, estimating food intake, assessing overall appetite as well as weight monitoring are indispensable because they are measures that may result in more personalized nutritional strategies in clinical practice for cancer patients.

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