

Malnutrition Risk of Cancer Outpatients Using Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool in Nyeri County Referral Hospital, Kenya.

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Abstract

Global Cancer burden is high and it is projected to rise by 47% by 2040 from an estimated incidence of 19.3 Million according to the 2020 global cancer estimates. There has been notable improvement in cancer care in Kenya but malnutrition in cancer patients remain highly under-recognised and the malnutrition screening tools remain under-utilised especially in Nyeri county. Analytical cross-sectional study design was used in this study and a Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) was used to screen the patients for malnutrition risk. All cancer patients who had attained an age of 18 years, at any cancer stage were included. SPSS was used to analyse data. A response rate of 93% was attained and sixty one percent of these were female while 39% were male. Sixty one percent had acquired primary school education and half of the respondents survive on a monthly income of between 0-10,000. Breast cancer was the most common cancer type in the population (39%), followed by esophageal and throat cancer at 14.5% and gastric cancer at 14%. Prostate cancer was the most prevalent among the male respondents at 11%. Using the MUST, more than half (51.7%) of the respondents were at a high risk of developing malnutrition, followed by low risk (32.6%) with only 15.7% respondents being at a medium risk of malnutrition. Using the BMI, half of the respondents, (50%) had a normal nutrition status and only 19.8% respondents were underweight. There is a significant difference between classifying nutrition status of cancer patients using BMI and Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool ($P<0.05$). Malnutrition Universal Screening tool is easy to use and has the ability to identify the risk of malnutrition among cancer patients and can be adopted in cancer care to improve cancer prognosis and reduce malnutrition rates among cancer patients.

Key words: Cancer, Malnutrition, Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool, Body Mass Index