NUTRITIONAL ASSESSMENT OF ELDERLY CANCER PATIENTS

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INTRODUCTION

During aging process, occurs a progressive decrease of skeletal muscular mass . Cancer and aging are associated, about 60% of all neoplasm . The objective of the study was to perform a nutritional evaluation in the elderly cancer patient by different parameters, and identify patients with malnutrition/underweight or with muscle mass depletion or force reduction.

METHODS

Prospective, cross-sectional study involving elderly patients with malignant tumors of both sexes. Malnutrition was diagnosed based on the data collection of the Mini Nutrition Assessment short form (MNA-SF), considering <7 points. For anthropometry, weigth and height were measured, being considered underweight when Body Mass Index (BMI) <23 kg/m². Muscle mass depletion when calf circumference (CC) < 31cm and force reduction were those with Palmar Grip Strength (PGS) <P20 of the sample, using a dynamometer. To perform the comparisons, using the variables and continuous correlations, was used Student's t test or ANOVA and Pearson's correlation. The significant level of 5% of probability was used to all cases ($p<0.05$).

RESULTS

We evaluated 200 elderly patients with different types of cancer (63.5% digestive tract), mean age of 72.5± 5.3 years, 16% of malnutrition according to MNA-SF. Regarding BMI, the majority of the patients were classified underweight, 42.1% among men and 52.7% among women. Both CC and PGS were higher in men than in women, with 19.5% of patients with CC<31cm and 21.5% with SPG<P20. The Pearson's correlation was performed and it was verified a good linear result between BMI and CC ($r=0,794$, $p<0,0001$), although a weak correlation between BMI and PGS ($r=0,279$; $p<0,001$). There was a preservation of the muscular mass of the eutrophic elderly cancer patients, demonstrated by the CC parameter (4.2% with CC<31cm).

CONCLUSION

There was no consensus regarding diagnosis of nutritional depletion among the studied parameters. The higher the amount of parameters used, the more complete the nutritional diagnosis will be.

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