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Methods for assessment of malnutrition in hospitalized children

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Malnutrition is very common at the time of hospital admission tended to increase during the hospital stay and has negative effects on prognosis, increases the incidence of complications and the morbidity and mortality. Diagnosis of malnutrition in ill child must be based on an objective assessment of nutritional status; this includes an adequate history of recent food intake and weight loss and adequate measurements. Objective: To present methods for assessment the malnutrition in hospitalized children and pointing out their advantages, limitations and risks.

Methods: Were analyzed chapters in textbooks, articles in relevant journals and theses related to the topic.

Results: Anthropometric measurements and body composition analysis are most commonly methods due to its easy application, low cost and invasiveness. Hematological parameters are of very little value in the nutritional evaluation. Biochemical parameters are very useful. Immunity and electrolyte levels are commonly used, but these changes are not generally related to problems of nutrition.

Conclusion: Adequate assessment of nutritional status is the most important of early nutritional intervention. Future goals are individualized diet according to the specific characteristics of each sick child. The diet should be continuously adjusted according to possible metabolic changes and nutritional status. Therefore, it is important to do studies that will identify the most sensitive methods to assess malnutrition, which can be applied to most of the sick children.