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Micronutrient intake in institutionalized elderly: Are they meeting the recommendations?

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Abstract

Elderly people are in high risk of malnutrition and several micronutrient deficiencies due to several reasons, some related to natural processes which occur due to aging and affect food intake and nutrient absorption and bioavailability.

The present observational study intended to evaluate micronutrient intake in a long-term elderly healthcare institution. The sample was composed by 30 individuals, 65 or more years old. The anthropometric assessment included weight, height, waist and body fat measurement. Food intake was evaluated through a 7-day period, all foods and beverages ingested by the subjects during that time were weighted before ingested.

Results showed a considerable high prevalence of overweight in this sample despite an average energy intake significantly lower when compared with the recommended values. This analysis revealed also significant deficiencies in A, D, E vitamins and folate as well as calcium, magnesium and zinc together with low fiber intake and high sugar content.

Further specialized nutritional interventions should focus on improving dietary quality, increasing the consumption of wholegrain cereals, seeds, nuts and legumes as well as raw vegetables, foods that were lacking in this sample.

Biography

Paula C. Pereira had completed her Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences, Clinical Nutrition area in 2007 in the Medicine Faculty of Coimbra University, Portugal. She is Associate Professor in Egas Moniz Health Sciences Institute, being responsible for lectures of Human Nutrition, Gastrotechnics and Food Biochemistry in Nutritional Sciences Graduation program as well as Dietary therapy, Nutritional investigation and Elderly Nutrition in Clinical Nutrition Master Program. Her fields of expertise are nutrition and breast cancer, functional foods, elderly nutrition as well food intake assessment.