

The impact of a nutrition cocktail round on patients with cancer

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Malnutrition is common among patients with cancer for many reasons⁽¹⁾ and is associated with reduced quality of life, lower activity level, increased treatment-related adverse reactions, reduced tumour response to treatment and reduced survival⁽²⁾. Oral nutritional supplements (ONS) are recommended to help maintain or improve nutritional status in patients with cancer⁽²⁾ but poor compliance remains a problem⁽³⁾. This initiative aimed to improve enthusiasm for ONS and increase nutritional awareness in patients attending an Oncology Day Unit in a Dublin teaching hospital.

In August 2006 a ‘cocktail round’ was launched in the Oncology Day Unit. All patients attending the Oncology Day Unit in the afternoon were offered a daily drink from a choice of 3 selected recipes, made up primarily of ONS (1.5 kcal/ml), fruit and energy-dense food products e.g. milk, ice-cream, lemonade. The energy content of the drinks ranged from 325 to 630 kcal. The initiative was evaluated over a one week period in December 2006 and 2007 using a patient satisfaction questionnaire.

In 2006 and 2007 the evaluation questionnaire was completed by eighteen and thirteen patients respectively. The survey demonstrated a high level of patient satisfaction with the cocktail round.

Year	Very good		Good		Average		Poor	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
2006	73	8	27	3	0		0	
2007	82	9	18	2	0		0	

More than 60% of patients reported that they have tried or would try the recipes at home. In addition, on having tried the cocktails a number of patients requested referral to the oncology dietitian. The total number of patients surveyed was small due to a low attendance in the Oncology Day Unit at the time of the evaluation.

A nutrition cocktail round has a positive impact on the nutritional awareness and attitude to nutritional supplements of patients attending an Oncology Day Unit.

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