

Abstract

The theoretical part of the thesis deals with the problems and characteristics of old age and ageing. Individual geriatric syndromes in relation to nutrition and cognitive disorders are described. A large part of the thesis focuses on nutrition in old age in relation to dementia, nutritional screening and nutritional status assessment.

The practical part aims to describe the specifics of nutrition in seniors with severe cognitive impairment versus seniors without cognitive impairment. Furthermore, the study aimed to assess whether cognitive deficits affect overall nutritional status, Body Mass Index (BMI), arm and calf circumference, consumption of oral nutritional supplements, diet modification and self-sufficiency of the elderly. To this end, two groups of clients were compared: those with severe cognitive impairment and those without cognitive impairment.

The selected research methodology was a questionnaire survey conducted within a residential care facility for the elderly. The questionnaire was authored by myself. In addition to the subjects' basic characteristics (age, gender, etc.), the questionnaire collects data regarding their diet, including BMI, weight development, and diet. Furthermore, the questionnaire addresses issues pertaining to swallowing difficulties and the necessity for dietary adjustments in terms of both food and fluid consistency. Furthermore, the questionnaire enquires about the typical portion size consumed at each meal and about the ability to feed oneself independently at mealtimes. Furthermore, the questionnaire enquired about the consumption of oral nutritional supplements and whether the client tolerated them (they did not cause digestive distress) and whether they were palatable. Other questions relate to the client's preferred and disliked foods, any food allergies or intolerances, and any nutrition-related problems (vomiting, diarrhoea, bloating, constipation, nausea, etc.). The penultimate question pertains to mobility. It enquires about the ability to walk without the use of compensatory aids, with the aid of a cane, with the aid of a walker (low or high), and whether the individual is immobile. In order to verify and compare the two groups, the questionnaire is supplemented with measurements of arm and calf circumference.

The results of this study demonstrated that individuals with cognitive impairment exhibited significantly reduced BMI and calf muscle circumference, as well as significantly reduced independence and a greater reliance on specific food preparation.

Keywords: elderly, nutrition, cognitive impairment, dementia, Alzheimer's dementia, geriatric syndromes, nutritional support