

Impaired nutritional status in stroke patients

Stroke is the second leading cause of death worldwide and a leading cause of adult disability¹.

Recovery is the ultimate goal and **early and intense rehabilitation is key** to restore as much independence as possible by improving physical and cognitive functions.



Post-stroke dysphagia is present in >50% of stroke patients²

How does malnutrition impact recovery?



- Risk of mortality
- Risk of poor functional prognosis
- Risk of cognitive impairment
- Rates of pressure injury, UTI, chest infection and GI bleed
- Hospital stay, readmissions and healthcare costs

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW (2022)³



Malnutrition is frequently present across the continuum of stroke care

The high prevalence of MALNUTRITION in stroke patients underlines the importance of continuously reviewing their nutritional status to identify and take action to prevent nutritional deterioration.

Prevalence of malnutrition in stroke patients: Observational Study⁴

Study population



N= 36

Sub-acute stroke with dysphagia



N= 49

Sub-acute stroke without dysphagia

Assessment

- Malnutrition (Mini Nutritional Assessment-Short Form test, MNA-SF test)
- Blood concentration of nutritional compounds
- QoL
- Activities of daily living

* These groups were also compared to age and sex-matched healthy reference subjects

Outcomes

% of patients at risk of malnutrition or malnourished*

*Assessed with MNA-SF

Stroke with dysphagia

65%

Stroke without dysphagia

45%

More findings

Sub-acute stroke patients showed lower blood nutrient levels (e.g.: Vitamins, minerals & fatty acids) compared to healthy reference subjects



What can be done to manage the situation?

ESPEN⁵ and ESSD-ESO⁶ recommend:



Early malnutrition and dysphagia screening in all acute stroke patients



Adequate nutritional management

Oral feeding not possible or nutrient intake insufficient

Enteral tube feeding

Oral feeding possible but inhibited due to dysphagia

Thickening agents for food and fluids

Oral nutritional supplements (thickened)



Interdisciplinary medical team collaboration for dietary and nutritional management

More information

Check out the ESPEN guidelines for clinical nutrition in neurology



[Click here to view](#)

Check out the ESO-ESSD Guidelines for dysphagia in stroke



[Click here to view](#)

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6. Dziewas R. et al. European Stroke Organisation and European Society for Swallowing Disorders guideline for the diagnosis and treatment of post-stroke dysphagia. *Eur Stroke J*. 2021; LXXXIX-CXV.