

Prevalence of malnutrition in free living elderly people in Iran: A cross-sectional study

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Abstract

Introduction: The elderly are a particularly vulnerable group. Malnutrition is common and increases an old person's vulnerability to disease. We determine the prevalence of malnutrition in free living elderly people and its relationship with nutritional status and some socioeconomic conditions. **Methods:** Nutritional status and its relationship with socioeconomic conditions were evaluated using Mini Nutritional Assessment in free-living elderly people (n=1962 using cluster sampling, 917 male/1045 female, aged >70). **Results:** Among the population, 46.7% were well nourished, 17.0% malnourished and 36.3% at risk of malnutrition. There was more malnutrition in females compared to males (13% vs. 10.8%; p<0.001), rural than urban (14.8% vs. 9.9%; p<0.001), non educated than educated (13.3% vs 6.9%; p<0.001), lonely than living with family (17.0% vs. 10.3%; p<0.001), unemployed than employed (13.3% vs. 6.3%; p<0.001), elderly on income support (Beheshti charity) compared with elderly on retirement salary, (41.7% vs. 3.3%; p<0.001). Total Mini Nutritional Assessment scores correlated significantly with length of education, age, waist circumference, and body mass index (r = 0.426, -0.142, 0.300 and 0.269 respectively). **Conclusion:** This study revealed a 17% malnutrition prevalence in this elderly group, with higher percentages in special socioeconomic conditions. Health care providers need to be aware of this problem and its scope. These results reinforce the need to screen, monitor and support elderly people.

Author keywords

Body mass index (BMI); Free living elderly people; Nutritional status; Socioeconomic conditions (SEC)

Indexed Keywords

EMTREE medical terms: aged; aging; article; body mass; cluster analysis; cross-sectional study; educational status; female; human; Iran; male; malnutrition; nutritional assessment; nutritional requirement; nutritional status; physiology; prevalence; rural population; sex difference; socioeconomics; statistics; urban population

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