

## Abstract – Original Research

### Authors & Affiliations:

Feehan Sinéad 1, Fox Emma 2, Greene Jacinta 3, Ryan Edel 4

- 1) Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Tallaght University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland.
- 2) Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Tallaght University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland.
- 3) Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Tallaght University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland.
- 4) Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Tallaght University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland.

### Presenting Author & Affiliation:

Emma Fox, Tallaght University Hospital

Title of Presentation: Determine whether having a specified weigh day improves compliance with admission and post-admission MUST screening guidelines in an acute hospital.

### 1. **Introduction**

20% of those admitted to Irish hospitals are at 'high risk' of malnutrition.[1] Without an appropriate screening programme, 60-85% of patients 'at risk' of malnutrition are overlooked.[2] Guidelines recommend completing nutritional screening within 24-hours of admission to hospital, repeating weekly regardless of nutritional status.[3]

### **Methodology**

MUST screening was examined in four wards, two with a specified 'weigh day', and two without. Those admitted exclusively to the study ward for a minimum of 7 days were eligible. 80 patient's MUST care plans and weight records were audited over 13 days; 36 on 'weigh-day', 44 on 'non-weigh day' wards.

### **Results**

A similar proportion on both ward types were weighed and had MUST screening completed on admission and post-admission.

A higher proportion of patients on 'weigh day' wards were weighed during their first (19.44% vs. 11.36%) and second week (30.56% vs. 11.36%) of admission. Every patient on a 'weigh day' ward was weighed at least once, 16% of patients on 'non-weigh day' wards were never weighed.

Admission MUST screening was the only MUST screening conducted for 91.67% of patients on 'non-weigh day' wards, compared to 50% on 'weigh day' wards.

### **Conclusion**

'Weigh day' wards foster a culture of weighing and screening patients throughout their admission, clearly evidenced by the higher proportion of patients being weighed and screened over the course of admission. A 'weigh day' helps to ensure that screening becomes part of the weekly patient routine.

1. Please give two to three key references (published by you or others) which can be used to inform future work:

1. Russell CA, Elia M. Nutrition Screening Survey in the UK and Republic of Ireland in 2011. BAPEN

[Internet]. 2012. Available from: <http://www.bapen.org.uk/pdfs/nsw/nsw-2011-report.pdf>

2. Elia M, Zellopour L, Stratton R. To screen or not to screen for adult malnutrition?. *Clinical Nutrition*. 2005;24(6):867-884.
3. Department of Health and Children. Food and Nutritional Care in Hospitals guidelines for preventing Under-Nutrition in Acute Hospitals. [Internet] Available at: [http://www.lenus.ie/hse/bitstream/10147/85517/1/undernutrition\\_hospital\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.lenus.ie/hse/bitstream/10147/85517/1/undernutrition_hospital_guidelines.pdf)

2. Please identify, where possible, up to three specific key messages that participants will take away from your poster presentation to inform their future practice.
  - 1) Current degree of patient weighing and MUST screening is far below recommended levels.
  - 2) Introducing a 'weigh day' is a simple way of raising awareness of patient weighing and MUST screening.
  - 3) 'Weigh days' help to foster an environment on wards whereby patient weighing and MUST screening is part of weekly ward routine.