

Effectiveness of Policies Related to Timing of Oral Nutrition Supplement Delivery in Hospitalized Patients



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BACKGROUND

Oral nutrition supplements (ONS) are used in hospital settings to increase energy and nutrient intake of patients experiencing decreased appetite and insufficient oral intake in an effort to prevent malnutrition and improve medical outcomes. Providers often struggle with patient adherence to prescribed ONS, for which recent studies have attributed to a lack of flavor variety, timing of delivery, and patient understanding of the need for ONS. This issue had been identified as an ongoing problem by dietetic interns during rotations.



PURPOSE

The purpose of this outcome study was to determine reasons for inadequate ONS intake at a local hospital and to evaluate current policies related to supplement timing and delivery.

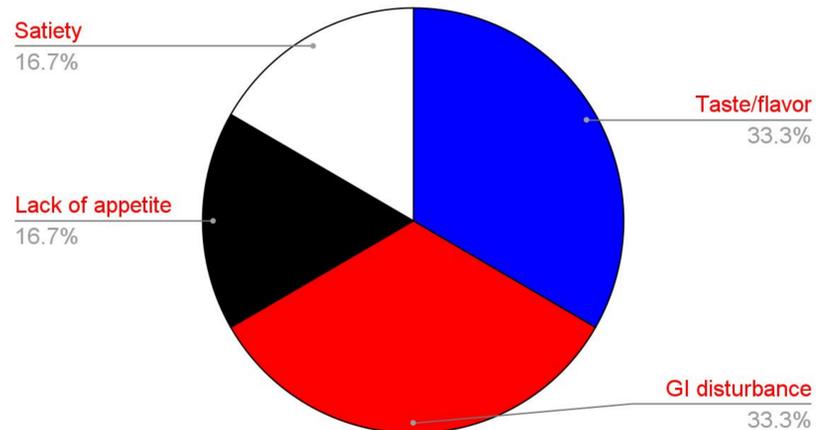
METHODS

Plate waste methods and interviews of patients receiving at least one ONS per day in a telemetry unit were conducted following lunch service. Patients excluded were those on comfort care or receiving enteral feedings. Interview questions included those related to ONS consumption and timing.

RESULTS

At the time of this study, thirteen out of the nineteen patients (68.4%) were receiving ONS. Of those, six (46%) receiving ONS reported not consuming them. Reasons reported for not consuming ONS included poor taste (n=2; 33%), upset stomach (n=2; 33%), feeling full following meals (n=1; 16.6%), and lack of appetite (n=1; 16.6%). Two patients stated they would prefer ONS between meals. About half of patients (54%) adhered to the prescribed ONS.

Patient reported reasons for not consuming ONS



CONCLUSIONS

Only 54% of patients receiving ONS reported ability to consume the ONS, meaning close to half were not adhering to the ONS prescription and potentially not meeting their nutritional needs. This signifies a need for adjusting processes that support increasing consumption of ONS such as implementing ONS rounds with patients to communicate flavor, temperature, and timing of delivery preferences to those responsible for ONS orders and delivery. Changes made may increase consumption and ultimately have a positive impact on nutrition and medical outcomes.

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