

Dieticians in clinical nutrition / British Dietetic Association.

Contributors

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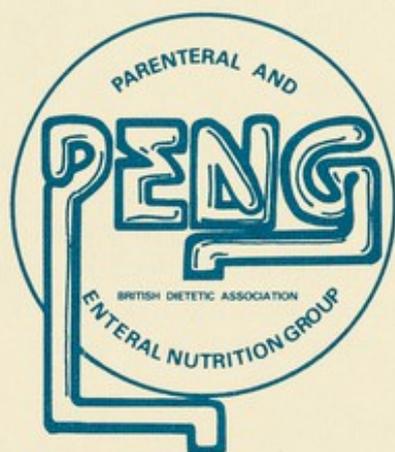
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**DIETITIANS
IN
CLINICAL NUTRITION**



THE BRITISH DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

The Dietitian has a vital role to play in the area of **Clinical Nutrition** by identifying patients at risk of malnutrition. Studies indicate that as many as 50% of patients in hospital show some signs of malnutrition. Many patients will be malnourished on admission but others will develop malnutrition whilst in hospital. Two groups of patients are at risk. These patients include:-

Those who are unable to take adequate oral diet such as

- unconscious patients
- patients with feeding difficulties due to disease of the mouth or oesophagus
- stroke patients who lose their swallowing reflex
- patients suffering chronic disease, e.g. cancer or renal failure, who lose their appetite or interest in food.

Those with increased requirements

- who undergo major surgery, especially of the digestive tract
- trauma patients with multiple fractures or burns whose need for nutrition is greatly increased by their condition.

The Dietitian can help medical and nursing staff identify patients at risk of malnutrition, and advise on the most appropriate feeding methods to meet the nutritional needs of the individual patient: this is known as "**Nutritional Support**".

METHODS OF NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT

Enteral

Supplemental Feeding

Supplementary nutrition can be provided in nourishing liquid form for the patients to drink in addition to their meals.

Tube Feeding

A narrow tube is passed into the digestive system, usually via the nose into the stomach. An appropriate liquid feed is then passed down this tube.

Parenteral or Intravenous Feeding

A fine bore tube is inserted into a vein and a solution of nutrients is administered via this tube directly into the bloodstream. This method is only used when a patient's digestive system fails, or when it is impossible to obtain sufficient nutrition from oral and/or tube feeding.

THE DIETITIAN'S ROLE IN NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT

To assess

the patient's nutritional requirements.

To advise

on the most appropriate feeding method for the patient's condition and devise suitable feeding regimens.

To liaise

with Doctors, Nurses, Pharmacists, Biochemists who are involved in caring for such patients. In some hospitals, this group of people may form a nutrition team of which the Dietitian will be a key member.

To monitor

the patient's response to feeding by using his/her knowledge of Medicine and Biochemistry to interpret blood and urine tests and other tests relating to drug therapy and the patient's changing condition.

To follow up

patients who may need to continue nutritional support when they leave hospital. The Dietitian will liaise with G.P.'s, Community Nursing staff, Social Services staff, Pharmacists, relatives and the patient, to ensure that adequate nutrition is provided.

To teach

student Dietitians, Nursing and Medical staff, and to up-date colleagues who may not be directly involved.

IN ADDITION.....

- Research work is often undertaken and Dietitians have presented their work at National and International Meetings.
- Liaison with the Pharmaceutical Industry is vital in order to assist in the development of suitable feeds and equipment.

PEN GROUP - The Parenteral & Enteral Nutrition Group of the British Dietetic Association, is a support group formed by Dietitians interested in clinical nutrition.

The Group arranges meetings and courses, prepares and provides literature, to expand the knowledge of its' members and others interested in this area of nutrition.

Local Contact:

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:-

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