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Integration of a specific nutritional supplement in pressure ulcer care

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Introduction

Studies have demonstrated an overall positive effect of nutritional intervention in the treatment of pressure ulcers. Nevertheless, undernutrition and protein-energy malnutrition are commonly observed in hospitalised patients with pressure ulcers. Providing a nutritional supplement, in particular that with specific nutrients for wound healing, may help to replenish shortages of nutrients so as to promote tissue repair.

Objectives

A nutritional supplement containing specific nutrients for wound healing, namely arginine, glutamine and HMB (leucine metabolite) has been introduced to inpatients in OLM with severe pressure ulcers (e.g. stage IV, large and/or multiple wounds) since March 2014.

Methodology

Malnutrition screening using Malnutrition Screening Tool (MST) is conducted for all inpatients during admission in OLM. When the criteria have been fulfilled, doctors or nurses will refer the cases to dietitian for nutritional assessment and intervention. Dietitians usually modified patient's diet plus prescribing nutritional supplements for patients in order to meet the increased nutrients requirement for wound healing. Starting from March 2014, the nutritional supplement containing the 3 specific nutrients has been available for dietitians to top-up nutritional status of patients with severe pressure ulcers.

Result

In order to evaluate the treatment effect of HMB fortified supplement, a retrospective review was conducted on patients with pressure ulcers who were prescribed with the supplement between March 2014 and September 2015. Sixteen patients with a total of 61 wounds were prescribed with the supplement for 1-71 days (mean: 13.6 days). Eight out of 61 wounds (13%) were healed. There was no improvement in regard of the mean areas of the wounds. However, when evaluating based on the proportion of the viable tissue, the proportion of granulation tissue significantly improved from 45.1% to 51.9% ($p < 0.008$). Pressure ulcer management is a multi-disciplinary approach in which medical nutrition therapy (MNT) is a vital

component. From this review, improvement has not been observed in the mean area which may be limited by the length of prescription. Continuity of MNT after discharge is beneficial.