

Rationale

Good nutritional status is essential for the successful rehabilitation of geriatric patients. However, studies concerning the prevalence of undernutrition in nursing home rehabilitation patients are scarce. This study investigated the prevalence of undernutrition, dietetic treatment and self-perceived nutritional status in older patients admitted to Dutch nursing home rehabilitation wards.

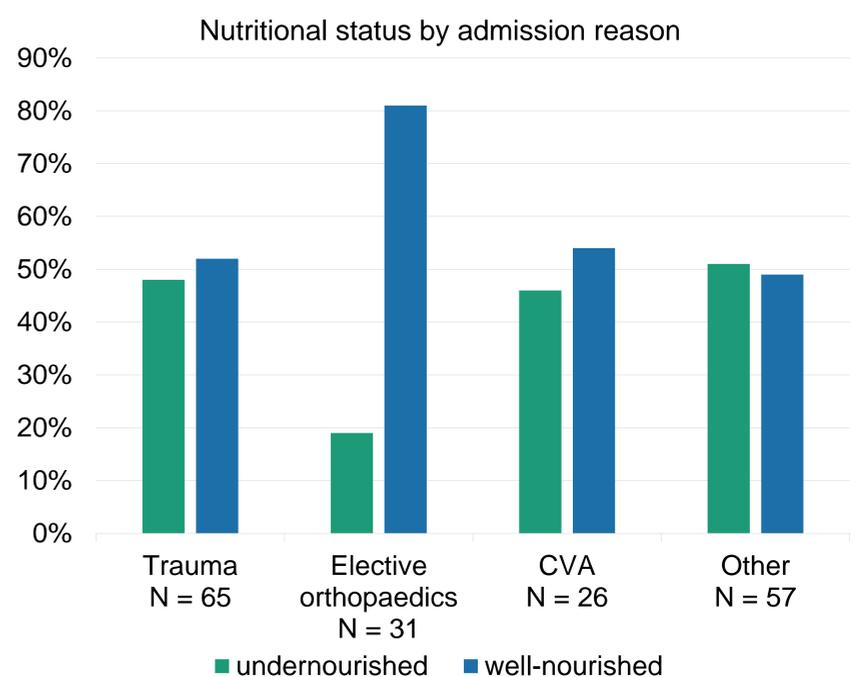
Methods

In this cross sectional study we included 190 patients (≥65 y) admitted to seven nursing home rehabilitation wards. Admission reasons were categorized as: trauma, elective orthopaedics, stroke and other. Perceived nutritional status was determined with the question: “Do you find yourself undernourished at the moment?” (yes/no). Information about dietetic treatment was obtained from medical records. Nutritional status was characterized as:

- Severely undernourished (>10% unintentional weight loss in the past six months and/or >5% unintentional weight loss in the past month and/or BMI ≤ 20 kg/m²),
- Moderately undernourished (5-10% unintentional weight loss in the past 6 months and/or BMI 20.01-22 kg/m²),
- Well-nourished (<5% unintentional weight loss in the past 6 months, BMI 22.01-28 kg/m²).

Results

A complete dataset was obtained of 179 patients (70% female, age 82 ± 8) of which 26% were severely undernourished and 14 % were moderately undernourished. Prevalence of undernutrition did not differ by sex or age. Of all patients, 36% received dietetic treatment. This percentage was higher in undernourished patients compared to well-nourished patients (56% vs 21%, p<0.001). Only one out of five undernourished patients considered themselves undernourished. Elective orthopaedics patients had the lowest prevalence of undernutrition (19%).



	Moderately/severely undernourished	Well-nourished	P
Total patients N = 179	78 (41%)	101 (56%)	
Age (mean ± SD)	82 (±8)	81 (±8)	0,41
Sex, female (N%)	54 (69%)	71 (70%)	0,89
Receiving dietetic treatment (N %)	44 (56%)	21 (21%)	<0,001
Self-perceived undernutrition (N%)	14 (18%)	1 (1%)	<0,001

Conclusion: More than one in three older patients in Dutch nursing home rehabilitation are moderately or severely undernourished, of which the majority does not consider themselves undernourished. Almost half of these patients did not receive dietetic treatment.