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Title: Audit of Provision of Enteral Nutrition (EN) to Head and Neck Cancer (HNC) Patients Receiving Radiotherapy Treatment (RT) in Cork University Hospital (CUH)

Body: Background: Patients with HNC can develop significant nutritional issues during RT requiring timely nutrition support. This audit aimed to assess current practice for delivery of EN in CUH.

Methods: We identified patients that underwent RT in 2022 for HNC. Inclusion and exclusion criteria applied. Only patients with otorhinolaryngology and HN skin squamous cell carcinoma were included. Data was collected from MOSAIQ and paper medical notes.

Results: 98 patients were included in final analysis. The majority of patients had nutrition impact symptoms and 88% experienced significant weight loss. 11% patients had a prophylactic percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube placed. 16 patients were recommended reactive nasogastric feeding (NGF), with 11 patients consenting. Mean weight loss at NG tube placement was 10.8%. The majority of tubes were placed in the final week/post RT. 6 patients were admitted to CUH for NGF.

Conclusion: Most patients had significant weight loss requiring nutrition support. Delays in reactive NGF were observed due to hospital admission. Therefore, we must ensure that reactive nutrition support is timely, cost effective and accessible for patients using an outpatient NGF pathway.

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