

TITLE: MALNUTRITION IDENTIFICATION AND DIAGNOSIS AT A UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL: TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

PRESENTER: J. Connolly-Schoonen, PhD, RD, L. Danowski, PhD, RD, A. Nemesure, M. Schoonen, Sicinski, E. Family Population & Preventive Medicine Nutrition Division, Stony Brook Medicine, Stony Brook, NY

LEARNING OUTCOME: Participants will be able to describe communication strategies that impact trends in agreement between registered dietitian/nutritionist identification and physician diagnosis of malnutrition in a university hospital.

ABSTRACT:

Disease-related malnutrition is estimated to impact 30-50% of hospitalized patients. As of 2012, registered dietitian/nutritionists (RDNs) have been encouraged to conduct nutrition-focused physical examinations (NFPEs) for the timely identification and treatment of malnutrition, so as to reduce associated complications. The purpose of this longitudinal quality improvement project is to determine the trend in agreement and documentation between RDNs identification and physician diagnosis of malnutrition, as well as the impact of various communication strategies. Prior to 2015, RDNs were trained to perform NFPEs, the assessment note template was modified and a specific electronic message was drafted for RDNs to send to physicians' electronic mailboxes alerting them of identification of malnutrition. The message was also sent to the coding team. In 2015 a review of 115 charts identified an 88% agreement between RDNs and physicians for both severe and non-severe malnutrition.

In 2016, RDNs sent direct emails and messages to physicians, but coders were not involved. A review of 85 charts identified a 54% and 58% agreement between RDNs and physicians for severe malnutrition and non-severe malnutrition, respectively.

In 2017, presentations were made to hospitalists and medicine residents and the query was revised. A review of 205 charts found a 78% and 48% agreement for severe malnutrition and non-severe malnutrition, respectively. RDN use of NFPEs as justification for identification of malnutrition did not impact physicians' propensity to document agreement ($p=0.30$).

To maintain physician engagement in diagnosis of malnutrition, multiple and regular communication strategies need to be employed.