Nurses’ Thoughts on Malnutrition

Study Title
Nurses’ perceptions regarding the prevalence, detection, and causes of malnutrition in Canadian hospitals: Results of a Canadian Malnutrition Task Force Survey

The Study
346 surveys were completed by nurses from 11 hospitals participating in the Canadian Malnutrition Task Force. The participating nurses worked in surgical and medical areas. Nurses were chosen as survey participants because they are often the first point of contact for patients when they are admitted into hospital. This means that they have a unique opportunity to identify patients at risk for malnutrition and to refer for a more detailed assessment if necessary.

What Was Found
a) Over 50% of nurses underestimated how often malnutrition occurs
b) Nurses considered identifying malnourished patients to be a priority (8.4/10 importance).
c) 95.5% of nurses would want to use a 3-question system to identify these patients.
d) Nurses wanted to gain more nutrition information (92% of them) however only some (39%) said they had access to it.
e) Nurses felt that a nutrition assessment should be completed on admission (94% of nurses) but only 67% felt that it was done for more than half of patients.

Steps to Improve
1. Accessible nutrition education for nurses.
2. Implement a malnutrition screening policy for nurses.
3. Connect hospital nutrition policy with nurses’ roles.
4. Increase the emphasis on nutrition in nursing curriculums.
5. Address the lack of eating help available to patients (as suggested by nurses).
6. Concrete definitions of roles for all members of the health care team.

Where to Find the Full Article
http://pen.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/09/04/0148607114548227


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