The Economic, Medical/Scientific and Regulatory Aspects of Clinical Nutrition Practice: What Impacts What?
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Foreword

Malnutrition is an under-recognized problem in hospitalized, home and community patients. It has been identified as an issue for more than 30 years, but has struggled to be recognized as an important issue by healthcare clinicians, administrators and government officials. Recent data show that at least 30% of hospitalized patients are malnourished, with a large majority of the cases unrecognized and untreated. Although awareness of the situation is increasing, there remains a great deal of work that must be done to educate healthcare professionals on the value of nutrition intervention as an integral part of medical therapy. Along with this is the need to educate administrators and regulators of the cost benefits of nutrition care. Recent studies have shown that disease-related malnutrition increases healthcare costs by 30–70%. In the UK it has been demonstrated that the costs for hospital malnutrition are greater than that for obesity. Nutritional interventions, representing only a small cost, may result in substantial absolute savings.

It is with these facts that the Nestlé Nutrition Institute organized this 12th Clinical and Performance Workshop with the title ‘The Economic, Medical/Scientific and Regulatory Aspects of Clinical Nutrition Practice: What Impacts What?’ in Peebles, Scotland.

Learnings from this workshop include the need to more clearly define malnutrition. There is a strong need to effectively educate physicians on the importance of nutrition in medical therapy – something currently lacking in most medical education. Additional work is needed to define outcomes impacted by nutrition intervention. The results of this work need to be clearly and effectively communicated to both healthcare administrators and government and regulatory officials. The identification, prevention and treatment of malnutrition need to be seen by all as an integral part of medical management, thus should not be excluded from reimbursement programs.
We want to thank the chairmen, Prof. Marinos Elia from the University of South Hampton, UK and Prof. Bruce Bistrian from Harvard Medical School, USA both experts in the field of clinical nutrition and the economics of malnutrition for putting together the excellent program of this workshop. We also thank our expert speakers for their valuable contribution. Finally, our thanks go to the team from Nestlé UK for their wonderful organization.

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