



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



Conference report - ONCA Turin Conference 2024

DAY 1: Thursday, 6th June

Welcome

Antonella Lezo, President of SINPE, Italian Society for Clinical Nutrition, and Professor Olle Ljungqvist, Director of European Nutrition for Health Alliance, co-hosted the event in Turin and online. The conference featured delegations from 20 countries and many virtual attendees. Lezo thanked the ONCA staff and co-organizer Andrea Pezzana for their contributions. Italy joined ONCA three years ago, and SINPE's creation of a comprehensive dashboard on malnutrition laid the groundwork for increased engagement, including the annual Malnutrition Awareness Week enhancing awareness and involvement of all the stakeholders in the fight against malnutrition. The ONCA experience in Italy brought together scientific societies, patient associations, the medical nutrition industry and health economics for the first time. A crucial point is the support from the Ministry of Health and health managers for this global initiative to efficiently translate clinical nutrition science and experience in helpful policies in healthcare. The session included a short video from SINPE's Malnutrition Awareness Week 2023.

Franco Ripa, Deputy Director of the Regional Health Department.

This one of the most significant events of the year in the Piedmont Region, addressing a crucial issue with significant epidemiological and health impacts. It underscores the need for a multi-sector approach, as confirmed by the presence of Jacopo Rosatelli from the municipality. The Piedmont Region has a robust clinical nutrition network, fostering high connectivity with both the government and users, aligned with common goals. Today's event serves as a buster of the practical activity and we will surely have a briefing to build on shared discussions and insights. Special thanks go to Antonella Lezo and Andrea Pezzana for their commitment.

Jacopo Rosatelli, Councilor for Welfare, Rights and Equal Opportunities of the City of Turin.

On behalf of Mayor Stefano Lo Russo and the City administration, the speaker expressed great honor in welcoming attendees to the International Optimal Nutrition Care for All Conference in Torino. The conference takes place in a city that values health as a comprehensive state of well-being, as defined by the World Health Organization. The Italian Constitution emphasizes that health is a fundamental right and a communal concern. Torino has demonstrated this commitment through various initiatives aimed at addressing food inequality and promoting a fair and sustainable food system. In 2017, the city promoted the implementation of the right to adequate food as part of its mission. The Statute of the City of Turin ensures access to nutritious, healthy, culturally and religiously appropriate food. Recently, Torino signed a Memorandum of Understanding focused on health promotion and nutrition education across all levels of the food chain and available to all and supported by alliances and synergies between various stakeholders. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Torino



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



established TorinoSolidale, a charity network supporting food distribution to families in need, which has since evolved into a stable platform for food solidarity and community empowerment.

Professor Olle Ljungqvist, chairman of the European Nutrition for Health Alliance (ENHA), welcomed everyone to the conference, expressing his joy at returning to Italy and appreciating its hospitality. He reflected on the success of the ONCA campaign, which began ten years ago and continues to thrive with the addition of Norway as the 21st country to join and over 16 malnutrition awareness weeks conducted. He highlighted that the campaign's mission is to translate nutritional care science into effective policies and emphasized the importance of patient collaboration in achieving these goals. He also mentioned the EU4orHealth National Implementation Fund available for advancing new healthcare practices. Professor Ljungqvist briefly discussed his own project, Enhanced Recovery After Surgery, which focuses on improving patient outcomes through better nutritional management and care. There is a need to avoid working in silos in healthcare management due to time constraints and poor control over the entire patient's journey. He stressed the importance of comprehensive care approaches and the need for continuous improvement in healthcare practices.

Session 1: NUTRITIONAL CARE: HOW DO WE GET FROM AWARENESS TO CONTROL?

Setting the scene: Implementing Nutritional Care for Optimal Health

Dr. Andrea Pezzana, Coordinator of the Piedmont Clinical Nutrition Network, discussed the complexity of nutritional care for optimal health, emphasizing a broad definition of health. He addressed the intricate issue of malnutrition, illustrating it with images from the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025). He stressed that malnutrition is influenced by environmental and lifestyle factors, impacting both the cost and quality of life for patients. Addressing it requires a collaborative, multifaceted approach involving more than just individual professionals. Dr. Pezzana highlighted the "triple burden" of global malnutrition: undernutrition, overweight and obesity, and hidden hunger (micronutrient deficiencies), underscoring their significance in chronic disease prevention. He advocated for rethinking health as more than just the absence of illness, aligning with the One Health framework, which integrates human, animal, and environmental health. He pointed out that malnutrition is a significant issue, citing the 1974 paper by Charles Butterworth that describes malnutrition as the "skeleton in the hospital closet." Dr. Pezzana explained that significant strides have been made in addressing malnutrition in Italy, supported by the Ministry of Health's educational programs. Piedmont exemplifies comprehensive care and innovative practices. Guidelines for food in hospitals, schools, and nursing homes have been implemented, and strategies for reducing food waste have been improved. He encouraged exploring new ideas and collaborations that integrate scientific knowledge with personal, local, and global perspectives to combat malnutrition with a transdisciplinary approach.



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024

Empowering Health Through Nutritional Care: A Patient-Centric Journey of Progress (virtually)

Laura del Campo, Director of PAVO, the Italian Federation of Cancer Patient Organizations, oversees a large network of more than 300 associations that address all types of cancer and provide various services to cancer patients and their families. One of their working groups is specifically focused on nutrition. Laura begins by highlighting that in Italy, nearly 4 million people live after a cancer diagnosis, and over 20% of them do not survive due to severe malnutrition. This concern has driven the organization's efforts to empower cancer patients to seek appropriate nutritional support. Since 2016, they have been informing patients about the importance of nutritional support through national surveys on cancer patients' dietary practices and sources of nutritional advice, as well as by producing educational materials and booklets on nutrition for cancer patients. They also present an annual report to the Italian Parliament, highlighting issues and proposing solutions to improve nutritional care. This has led to the creation of important guidelines for nutritional care across Italy. Another crucial part of the Federation's work is training caregivers to provide essential knowledge and skills to support patients, including aspects of nutritional care. In conclusion, Laura explains that the organization's approach is based on collaboration between cancer patients, scientific institutions, and governmental bodies to create effective solutions for the nutritional needs of cancer patients.

Getting Grip on Nutritional Care at a National Level

Ugo Della Marta, General Director of the Directorate for Hygiene, Food Safety, and Nutrition of the Italian Ministry of Health. Della Marta begins by noting that, according to the WHO, Europe and Iran have the highest obesity and overweight rates, ranging from 38% to 47%. Italy ranks third in Europe, a major concern for the Mediterranean region. Increased income has led to greater access to food but also unhealthy dietary habits and chronic diseases. In Italy, progress has been made through initiatives like the 2017 establishment of the TaSiN (Technical Working Group on Nutritional Safety) which promotes healthy aging through nutrition. This group, comprising representatives from institutional and scientific sectors, develops guidelines and training programs for integrating nutrition assessments into elderly care. Dr. Della Marta highlights investments in research to better understand elderly nutritional needs and promote the Mediterranean diet as a healthy eating model. The Ministry of Health also focuses on promoting healthy, sustainable diets for children and adolescents through scientifically based projects in schools. Additionally, guidelines for collective catering in schools, hospitals, and healthcare settings aim to improve food service quality and prevent nutrition-related diseases. Dr. Della Marta concludes by affirming the ministry's commitment to promoting healthy diets and aging through collaboration among institutions, the scientific community, the food industry, and academia, all working towards comprehensive nutritional policies and health promotion strategies.



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



Global Insights into Disease-Related Malnutrition: Understanding the Worldwide Impact

Francesco Branca (Virtually), Director, Department of Nutrition and Food Safety - World Health Organisation, begins his presentation by highlighting the analysis from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation on global disease burdens, where dietary risks rank among the top ten risk factors, accounting for eight million deaths each year. When including the impact of malnutrition, such as high body mass index, overweight and obesity, an additional 25 million deaths occur annually. Furthermore, three million deaths are attributed to maternal and child malnutrition, including poor breastfeeding practices, resulting in a total that represents one-third of the global disease burden. The situation is even more severe when considering the disability-adjusted life years lost due to malnutrition. Given this data, Dr. Branca emphasizes the need for health systems to address nutritional disorders, which includes managing underweight conditions, preventing vitamin and mineral deficiencies, and offering counseling for behavioral changes related to breastfeeding and healthy diets. As Dr. Branca explains, a comprehensive package of essential nutrition services should be available at primary healthcare levels. However, the data shows that only one-third to one-half of the global population has access to these essential services. He also discusses how the WHO is advocating for policies that support healthy food procurement in public institutions, including hospitals, with the aim of ensuring that public food services promote healthy diets and thereby have a significant impact on public health.

Considering this, it becomes evident that achieving universal health coverage requires that everyone has access to quality nutrition services at all levels of care. By promoting breastfeeding, improving hospital nutrition, and implementing effective public food policies, as Dr. Branca asserts, we can make significant strides toward better global health outcomes.

SESSION 2: COLLABORATIVE ACTIONS ON NUTRITIONAL CARE AT A EUROPEAN LEVEL

Introduction by Prof Olle Ljungqvist: What we're aiming to achieve with the European Nutrition for Health Alliance is to take scientific research and translate it into effective policy. That's one of our main objectives. We all agree that under-nutrition needs to be addressed, and we believe that the EU health policy table is the appropriate venue for this discussion. To accomplish this, we collaborate with various stakeholders, including the European Commission. Key: effective communication and having the right people at the table. We have dedicated organizations that support this project and have been instrumental in its success. To create impact at the EU level, it is crucial to have a unified message from multiple countries. We engage in various activities, including EU projects like EU4Health and EU4Nutrition, and we participate in initiatives such as Healthy Aging.



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



Collaborative Initiatives and Declarations: Strengthening Partnerships in WHO Europe

Annemieke van Ginkel-Res, President of the European Federation of Associations of Dietitians (EFAD), presents the association, which is committed to a multidisciplinary approach, recognizing the importance of collaboration in advancing nutritional care. Key milestones include their membership in the European Nutrition Health Alliance, allowing collaboration at the EU level. Recently, they became a non-state expert member of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, enabling attendance at meetings and presentation of position statements on primary care and nutritional care. A significant message they advocate is that every European citizen should have access to safe and appropriate nutritional care. In 2020, they partnered with ESPEN to strengthen collaboration and involve dietitians in guideline development. The 2022 Vienna Declaration asserts proper nutrition as a human right, a powerful document they promote across Europe. Additionally, the Budapest Resolution supports the right to nutritional care for all Europeans. They had productive meetings with the FAO and Stella Kyriakides, emphasizing the importance of their message. Despite numerous WHO documents on nutrition, these issues are often overlooked in regional meetings, necessitating their continued advocacy. Their work in Kazakhstan on primary care and in Tajikistan on capacity building underscores the need for tailored strategies for each country's health system. In conclusion, EFAD emphasizes integrated, multidisciplinary data for accurate diagnosis and effective patient care. Their unwavering message is that every European deserves safe and appropriate nutritional care, and they will persist in advocating for this right.

Rocco Barazzoni, President of the European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN) expressed gratitude for the invitation and emphasized the importance of collaboration between ESPEN and EFAD. He thanked Annemieke for highlighting this crucial aspect and noted the challenges involved in implementing effective partnerships. Barazzoni recounted ESPEN's efforts over the past five to six years to prioritize malnutrition and optimal nutritional care within the WHO framework. Initially, WHO focused primarily on undernutrition and poverty, neglecting the broader issue of

disease-related malnutrition. ESPEN's strategy began at an obesity congress in Glasgow in 2019, leading to valuable connections with WHO Europe's Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases Office. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these connections facilitated collaboration on nutritional care guidelines for patients, emphasizing the importance of screening, diagnosing, and treating malnutrition in clinical settings. ESPEN also contributed to WHO projects on obesity and tuberculosis nutrition, highlighting malnutrition's dual role as a risk factor and complication. ESPEN became a non-state actor with WHO Europe in September 2022, allowing them to submit statements on primary care nutrition and participate in international events. Barazzoni emphasized the need for government advocacy to elevate disease-related malnutrition on the WHO agenda, with Croatia playing a key role. Looking ahead, ESPEN aims to continue leveraging relationships and opportunities to advance nutritional care, building on the progress made at an upcoming plenary session in Milan.



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



Fostering Patient Advocacy: Catalysts for Advancing Nutritional Care Policies in the European Union

Tunde Koltai, a representative of the European Patients' Forum (EPF), emphasizes that she represents patients, who are the core of the healthcare system. Patients face various challenges while living with their diseases, so the aim is to foster collaboration with specialists, with a focus on nutritional status and health. Investing more in healthcare is crucial because a healthy population leads to greater productivity and increased tax contributions for the country. Raising awareness about malnutrition benefits everyone. Koltai advocates for using all educational channels to inform the public and professionals about malnutrition and undernutrition, from schools to high-level WHO committees. This includes updating websites, organizing informational sessions, and ensuring healthcare professionals are aware of the real-world implications of medical conditions. Furthermore, Koltai stresses the importance of learning from countries with successful practices, taking a proactive role in the policy agenda. This involves advocating for national nutrition policies, monitoring relevant indicators, and linking various aspects of the nutrition field, including agriculture, home nutrition, social care, and hospital care.

Uniting IF patients' voices - Are we ready to accept the challenge?

Sergio Settanni is a board member of the “un Filo per la Vita” association and father of a 15-year-old girl affected by intestinal failure (IF). He emphasized the importance of understanding malnutrition and ensuring proper care for those with IF. Recognizing malnutrition as a consequence of the condition is essential for timely diagnosis and effective treatment, ensuring consistent support across regions with the goal of providing high-quality care uniformly. Orphanet has classified IF as a rare disease in the European community. However, many EU member states have yet to enforce this classification, causing significant disparities in treatment and patient rights based on location. Patient associations were established to fill gaps where the health system and legislation were lacking. Their role has evolved to include advocacy for IF across various domains, engaging with politicians, policymakers, medical societies, and other stakeholders on a voluntary basis. As these associations matured, they shifted their focus from merely sharing strategies to emphasizing positive outcomes and best practices. Reframing IF from being seen as a cost to an area where effective treatment can lead to significant improvements became crucial. The association has collaborated with nine other organizations to address intestinal failure, creating a network to support and advance understanding and care for the condition.

Marek Lichota, Appetite for Life, a Crohn's disease patient and parent, shares their emotional journey of managing a chronic illness. After becoming dependent from the home treatment system due to complications, they gained significant experience in improving quality of life for others in similar situations. This led to the founding of “Appetite for Life” in Poland in 2005, an international association representing individuals with chronic intestinal failure. The organization aims to improve patients' quality of life and advocate for their needs by empowering, educating, supporting and uniting those with chronic intestinal failure and inflammatory bowel diseases. They organize educational activities like workshops and conferences on relevant topics, run informational



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



campaigns, and strive to gain media attention for these issues. They have engaged with health institutions, making significant strides at national and EU levels. Their efforts include participating in a parliamentary committee focused on nutrition in oncology treatment. One rewarding aspect of their work is seeing the positive impact on patients' lives, such as celebrating the 40th anniversary of the first home parenteral nutrition (HPN) in Poland. They have also supported Ukrainian patients affected by the war, helping relocate individuals in need of care. Despite challenges, the initiative to create a structured legal alliance of patient organizations represents a significant step forward. The speaker emphasizes the importance of continued communication and collaboration, driven by passion and determination to make a difference in patients' lives.

SESSION 3: PAN-EUROPEAN GOOD PRACTICES IN POLICY SHAPING

Celebrating Triumphs: Acknowledging the Impact of Community Dietitians in Italy

Ersilia Troiano, Italian National Dietitians Association, is honored and grateful to the ONCA network, especially to Antonella Lezo, for this opportunity and extends special thanks to Chiara Perrone from the ASAND Specialist Group and the European Specialist Dietetic Network. She discusses the Budapest Resolution, endorsed by EFAD on October 21, 2022, which promotes global recognition of the right to access nutritional care. It urges European politicians to ensure access to appropriate nutritional care for all citizens. Primary care is crucial for early identification and management of malnutrition, as emphasized by ESPEN. The Italian Ministerial Decree No. 77/2022 aims to standardize the primary care network, integrate care priorities, promote preventive health measures and align with European standards. This model features community-based care centers, hospitals, and hospices, where dietitians play a vital role. Despite having 6,032 active dietitians, Italy needs an additional 600 in primary care. Recent legislation and practices in regions like Lombardy and Tuscany show progress. However, Italy must continue enhancing nutritional care standards and referral pathways.

Navigating Nutritional Policies in the UK: Valuable Lessons from Intestinal Failure Strategies

Simon Lal, Professor of Gastroenterology, discusses the challenges faced by patients with intestinal failure (IF) and outlines some of the UK's experiences and strategies to address these challenges. IF is a condition where the gut cannot absorb sufficient nutrients and fluids, necessitating intravenous feeding, known as parenteral nutrition (PN), which can be temporary or permanent. Managing IF often involves a central venous catheter, posing risks such as infections and blockages. Lal highlighted the variability in access to home parenteral nutrition (HPN) across countries. Countries like Brazil and Spain have relatively low levels of HPN access, the UK has intermediate levels, and the USA and Denmark have very high levels. This disparity indicates inequitable access to HPN for patients globally. In the 1970s and 80s, pioneers in the UK worked to establish national centers for managing severe IF, which led to the designation of Salford and St. Mark's Hospital as the primary centers for IF care. These centers have grown to accommodate the increasing number of patients and have developed other centers across the UK through a national procurement process. Salford's service has expanded from a small ward to a dedicated 21-bed unit for severe IF patients. Lal emphasized the importance of expanding services, supporting other centers through mentoring, complex case discussions and



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



sharing best practices. Simon Lal and his team are working on revising UK quality standards to make them internationally relevant and to share their experiences globally, with the goal is to achieve equal standards of care for all European patients with IF by 2030 through initiatives like the ATLAS programme.

Aligning Health: Nutritional Care Strategies in Pursuit of CVD Policy Objectives

Roberto Volpe, European Heart Network, discusses the role of nutrition in cardiovascular prevention and the challenges in this area. Many Europeans die before the age of 65, primarily from cancer, with nutrition playing a significant role in these statistics. One-third of cancer cases are related to nutrition and obesity, and dietary risks are the leading cause of cardiovascular diseases after smoking. Addressing dietary risks such as hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, diabetes, and obesity is crucial. One significant challenge is the high cost of healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables, which increases from farm to market. Policies are needed to support farmers and make healthy food more affordable while also implementing taxes on unhealthy foods like soda and processed snacks. There has been progress in regulating trans fatty acids in the European Union. France has also implemented a soda tax, and there are ongoing discussions about similar measures in Italy. However, there is strong opposition from industries concerned about job losses due to these taxes. Food labeling is an effective tool for guiding consumers towards healthier choices. Systems like the Nutri-Score offer a simple, easy-to-understand rating for food products. However, the Nutri-Score system is still debated and needs improvement to address issues such as ultra-processed foods. It is necessary to continue building alliances with various organizations to strengthen efforts in nutritional care and cardiovascular disease prevention. This includes working with patient associations and exploring new strategies to improve public health.

Exploring Examples and Challenges in Nutritional Care Continuity

Alessandra Taraschi, General Medical Council, Province of Turin, discusses the role of General Practitioners (GPs) in Italy. GPs are freelance professionals affiliated with the national healthcare system, and their primary responsibilities include prevention, health promotion, managing acute and chronic conditions, and providing proactive care for chronic and vulnerable patients. Chronic diseases affect nearly 40% of the Italian population, with many of these conditions linked to nutritional issues. Effective management of chronic diseases often requires both medical treatment and lifestyle changes. Recent guidelines emphasize prevention and lifestyle modifications as key strategies for managing chronic diseases. For instance, the Diabetes Prevention Program demonstrates that lifestyle changes can delay or prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. In Piedmont, an integrated management model has been implemented where GPs collaborate closely with specialists to manage conditions such as diabetes. This collaborative model has successfully reduced mortality from cardiovascular diseases and improved diabetes management. Looking ahead, the goal is to extend this model to other conditions, such as COPD, osteoporosis and celiac disease. Continuity in nutritional care is essential for managing chronic diseases and enhancing public health. The major effort is to integrate care models and preventive measures to achieve these improvements.

The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



DAY 2: Friday, 7th June

Plenary Session: The Italian Plan of attack for 2024 – Italian Societies Campaigning

Francesco Dentali, Federation of the Associations of Hospital Internists – FADOI, expressed his gratitude for the invitation and highlighted the longstanding collaboration with SINPE. He emphasized the growing importance of nutritional aspects in patient care and presented a proposal for collaboration. Dentali outlined the challenges in internal medicine in Italy, noting the high prevalence of multi-morbidity and polypharmacy among elderly patients. He stressed the importance of preparing patients for various scenarios to improve outcomes and reduce rehospitalizations. Each patient typically faces 2-3 rehospitalizations annually, impacting productivity and decision-making. He concluded by emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to treatment.

Paolo Pedrazzoli, member of Italian Society of Medical Oncology – AIOM, expressed gratitude for the invitation and discusses AIOM's commitment to addressing malnutrition in cancer patients, especially those not undergoing treatment. Over the past decade, they have collaborated with organizations



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



like SINPE and FAVO to tackle issues such as the lack of nutritional guidelines and support for home patients. In 2015, AIOM formed a working group that has since expanded to include various professional societies. This group, now called the InterSociety Italian Working Group for Nutritional Support in Cancer, has published papers and recommendations to raise awareness and improve nutritional support in oncology. They also created a Bill of Rights for nutritional support in collaboration with patients. AIOM's efforts extend to addressing alternative diets like fasting and hypocaloric diets, which often lack clinical evidence. Education is a key focus, exemplified by the University of Pavia's Master's degree in Oncological Nutrition. AIOM has been a pioneer in investing in nutrition for cancer care, publishing guidelines and recommendations. Moving forward, AIOM aims for greater collaboration with scientific societies and increased investment in national health resources to enhance nutritional care for cancer patients. Their recent efforts include publishing AIOM guidelines on the National Guidelines System of the Italian National Institute of Health.

Barbara Paolini, Italian Association of Dietetics and Clinical Nutrition – ADI, highlighted the association's mission to promote clinical nutrition and metabolism, focusing on community health and effective treatment for acute and chronic patients, particularly in combating malnutrition. She discussed ADI's initiatives, including National Obesity Awareness Day, with the 2023 focus on sarcopenic obesity, and this year Malnutrition Awareness Week, which focused on sarcopenia and cachexia in heart failure patients. Paolini noted the significant prevalence of malnutrition in these patients, ranging from 20% to 95%, and stressed the need for standardized intervention and treatment methods. She underscored the importance of training first responders to identify malnutrition risks and refer patients to specialists. Collaboration with the Italian Society of Cardiology was also mentioned. She concluded by emphasizing the need for personalized nutritional screening and intervention, highlighting the considerable work ahead in this field.

Claudio Romano, Italian Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology Hepatology and Nutrition – SIGENP, expressed his gratitude for the invitation to this important meeting. He discussed the activities of the society, particularly their focus on pediatric nutrition. Romano emphasized research on a condensate catheter device and other significant topics in both basic and clinical nutrition, highlighting the importance of healthy nutrition for overall health. SIGENP's main areas of interest include intensive care units, inflammatory bowel diseases, and internal and artificial nutrition for children with gastrointestinal impairments. This encompasses children with neurological impairments, cholestatic disease, malignant disease and cancer. The society is also committed to standardizing the management of parenteral nutrition across Italy, aiming to reduce treatment risks and improve outcomes. One of the most important activities of SIGENP is maintaining a registry of pediatric home artificial nutrition patients in Italy. This registry has facilitated numerous studies and publications, demonstrating its significance to the society.

Ersilia Troiano, Technical Scientific Association of Food, Nutrition and Dietetics of Italian Dietitians – ASAND, outlined the association's efforts since 2022 in collaboration with SINPE and EFAD (European Federation of the Association of Dietitians). In 2022, ASAND and SINPE translated ESPEN's clinical guidelines on hospital food service and created infographics to highlight the importance of nutritional screening and assessment during Malnutrition Awareness Week. These resources were shared with



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



professionals to increase awareness. ASAND also supported EFAD's Malnutrition Awareness Week activities, including a notable social campaign in Italy. Looking forward, ASAND plans to conduct a survey to evaluate the use and impact of these guidelines in hospitals, focusing on hospital-acquired malnutrition, barriers to nutritional adequacy, and patient satisfaction with meal services. Preliminary results are expected to be presented during Malnutrition Awareness Week in 2024.

Interactive Break-out Workshops Round #1

1. Empowering Health through Knowledge: Implementing Successful Nutrition Education. Moderators: Cristina Cuerda and Maurizio Muscaritoli

Cristina Cuerda highlights the need to improve patient nutrition to boost overall health and addresses three key questions about implementing nutrition education: its necessity, responsibility, and methods. She notes that medical training often prioritizes disease treatment over holistic care, including nutrition. The text discusses various international approaches to nutrition education: France has a dedicated nutrition program with a national exam; the Czech Republic offers a specialized postgraduate nutrition course; Slovenia includes clinical nutrition in both undergraduate and postgraduate studies; while Turkey has limited nutrition curriculum but is making strides through student congresses. The role of the food industry in enhancing nutrition education is also considered. The discussion emphasizes that while progress is being made, there is still substantial room for improvement and greater standardization in nutrition education globally.

Maurizio Muscaritoli argues that understanding nutrition is complex due to its daily presence and critical role in health. He stresses the importance of recognizing nutrition's multifaceted nature, which includes both primary and tertiary prevention. Muscaritoli highlights the need for broader education and integration of clinical nutrition across all medical disciplines, pointing out the challenges of promoting nutrition therapy without a specific reference organ or pharmacological treatments. He calls for a shift in perception and greater awareness to enhance nutrition's role in healthcare.

Cristina Cuerda discusses the efforts to improve nutrition education in medical schools through the Nutrition Education in Medical Schools (NEMS) initiative. This project aims to make nutrition education mandatory and comprehensive, covering basic, applied, and clinical nutrition. She highlights ESPEN's role in developing resources, guidelines, and workshops to support this goal, and emphasizes the importance of equipping medical students with the knowledge to address nutritional issues effectively.

Muscaritoli's Follow-Up elaborates on the NEMS project's educational framework, detailing the core topics and learning objectives for medical students. He emphasizes the importance of integrating nutrition into medical curricula to ensure future doctors can effectively address nutritional problems. Muscaritoli highlights the collaborative effort behind creating educational materials and expresses hope that these resources will be widely adopted and impactful.



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



Cristina Cuerda emphasized the need for educational materials to be translatable into various languages to support project implementation and suggested offering these resources to councils. She addressed concerns about potential overlaps with existing programs and the importance of clarity in targeting different educational levels.

Speakers proposed creating e-learning modules with assessments and using AI to enhance accessibility. They highlighted the value of integrating dietitians into medical education and discussed the need for a multidisciplinary approach.

The conversation also covered the importance of making materials adaptable for various educational contexts and improving patient literacy. Maurizio Muscaritoli and others stressed a holistic approach to therapy, including nutrition, and addressed the ethical and legal challenges of defining nutrition and hydration as treatments.

2. Enabling Patient Engagement: The Essential Driver for Advancing Nutritional Policies

Robert Greene emphasized the pivotal role of patient engagement in addressing malnutrition. Greene highlighted that the transition from awareness to control of malnutrition hinges on effective communication, robust support systems, patient empowerment, education, and the use of technology. Communication ensures clear and consistent messaging between healthcare providers and patients, fostering understanding and adherence. Education equips patients with the knowledge necessary to make informed dietary choices. Empowerment involves giving patients the confidence and tools to take an active role in their nutritional health. Support provides the necessary resources and encouragement to sustain these efforts. Finally, technology offers innovative solutions to enhance patient engagement and personalize care. These elements are crucial for enabling patient engagement in nutritional care. The session underscored that by actively involving patients in their healthcare journey through these means, policies can be better tailored to meet diverse needs, leading to improved health outcomes and greater adherence to nutritional guidelines.

3. Metrics that matter: Transforming Nutritional Care Policies through Data-Driven Paradigm Shifts. Moderators: Alessandro Laviano and Mark Nuijten

Mark Nuijten's presentation highlights the gap between healthcare professionals' goals and the actual benefits to patients in nutritional care. He emphasizes the need for timely and effective screening for nutritional needs, particularly in oncology, where malnutrition is often underdiagnosed, leading to worse patient outcomes and higher healthcare costs. Nuijten points out inconsistencies in reimbursement policies for oral nutritional supplements (ONS) across countries and critiques the reliance on traditional randomized controlled trials (RCTs) for assessing nutritional interventions. He advocates for a new approach to health technology assessment (HTA) that incorporates AI and big data, promotes value-based pricing, and develops specific HTA guidelines for nutrition. In essence, Nuijten calls for a shift towards evidence-based, patient-centered evaluation of nutritional care.



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



The discussion between participants focuses on integrating big data and artificial intelligence (AI) into research and healthcare, with an emphasis on nutrition and clinical trials. The potential benefits include enhanced precision in dietary recommendations and improved clinical trial designs through the analysis of extensive datasets. However, traditional randomized controlled trials (RCTs) often face limitations due to their restrictive criteria and non-representative samples, making findings less broadly applicable. In nutrition research, there's debate about the current evidence linking diet to health, with some experts advocating for studies that also consider psychological factors. Data privacy regulations like the GDPR in Europe complicate the use of large datasets, affecting research capabilities. Economic factors and the need for legislative changes to support nutritional

interventions are also discussed. Additionally, there's a push to improve the nutritional quality of supplements and hospital foods, which are often seen as inadequate. Overall, while big data and AI hold promise for advancing research and healthcare, there are notable challenges and considerations that must be addressed.

In his presentation, Alessandro Laviano addresses the critical issues of malnutrition awareness and management in hospitals. He notes a significant gap between reported malnutrition rates and actual patient weight loss, emphasizing that intentional weight loss can be linked to cancer risk and that many patients do not meet their nutritional needs. Laviano criticizes the undervaluation of nutritional care compared to other medical specialties and advocates for redefining its role as either a direct health intervention or a way to enhance overall treatment efficacy. He highlights the disparity between survival rates and patient-reported outcomes, recommending more flexible nutritional targets based on individual baselines rather than fixed standards. Laviano supports the use of recent studies, biomarkers, and big data to improve nutritional assessment and outcomes. He calls for a shift in how malnutrition is framed, focusing on improving overall well-being and quality of life.

The discussion centered on the complexities of addressing malnutrition and evaluating its impact within collaborative healthcare settings. There was a focus on the challenge of attributing success to specific individuals or interventions when many professionals are involved in patient care. Malnutrition, particularly in overweight patients, is often overlooked, highlighting the need for better assessment tools and the potential use of artificial intelligence to improve body composition evaluations. The conversation also touched on the definition of malnutrition, debating whether it should be classified as a disease or a symptom of other conditions. There were suggestions to use data to refine this definition and improve understanding. The cost-effectiveness of nutritional care was another key topic, with an emphasis on the importance of demonstrating its value and educating others about its benefits. Finally, the discussion highlighted the potential of advanced data analysis and technology, such as artificial intelligence, to enhance nutritional assessments and overall healthcare outcomes.



Interactive Break-out Workshops Round #2

1. Economic Foundations: Steering Nutritional Care Policies Towards Health

Moderators: Emanuele Cereda and Henrik Højgaard

Emanuele Cereda outlined the purpose of the discussion, emphasizing its role in stimulating ideas and data sharing on improving nutritional care policies across various levels: regional, national, and European. He acknowledged the ambitious nature of these goals and introduced his presentation on health economics, stressing its significance in enhancing healthcare effectiveness. Cereda highlighted the increasing costs and challenges associated with nutritional care and the need for effective strategies to improve access for patients. He underscored the importance of evaluating both direct and indirect costs, noting that many expenses arise from complications linked to diseases rather than from treating malnutrition itself. Effective strategies, he argued, can yield significant benefits even with modest investments. He also addressed the value-based care model, which evaluates the quality

of care and patient experience, and the various analytical methods available to assess economic impacts, such as cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses. Cereda acknowledged that while randomized trials are high-quality, real-world evidence and quality improvement programs might be more practical for current research needs. He further discussed the limitations and advantages of different study types, noting that randomized trials, while thorough, can be costly and may not always provide generalizable results. In contrast, real-world evidence offers broader applicability and is less expensive. Cereda emphasized the need for strategies focused on improving access to care and tailoring interventions to patient-specific needs. He advocated for better screening and characterization of patients to ensure that interventions are effective and patient-centered. He concluded by stressing the importance of developing policies that not only address malnutrition but also incorporate regional and setting-specific considerations to maximize impact.

Henrik Højgaard, a gastroenterologist, discussed the intersection of economics and healthcare in Denmark, focusing on the challenges posed by an aging population, increasing prevalence of multiple health conditions, and a shortage of healthcare professionals. He highlighted the economic burden of malnutrition, which inflates healthcare costs and impacts various patient groups. Højgaard advocated for data-driven approaches to better understand and address malnutrition, stressing that improved management could lead to reduced costs and better outcomes. He outlined Denmark's tax-funded healthcare system, which is divided into regions and municipalities, and noted difficulties in coordinating care across these divisions. Despite progress in developing nutritional programs and improving data collection, he emphasized the need for more reliable data and the importance of economic calculations in shaping healthcare investments and policies.

In the discussion, participants focused on advocating for nutritional care in healthcare systems. They debated the effectiveness of using local versus international data, with some emphasizing that local studies are more persuasive to national policymakers. The importance of incorporating disease-specific data to demonstrate the impact of nutritional care on specific conditions was highlighted. Challenges in collecting comprehensive data, especially in fragmented healthcare systems, were



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



noted. Effective communication with policymakers, using relatable stories and examples rather than just abstract data, was seen as crucial. The balance between extending survival and improving quality of life through nutritional interventions was discussed, along with the need for unified indicators to standardize evidence across countries. The conversation underscored the need for strong local data and effective communication strategies to integrate nutritional care into healthcare systems.

2. Optimizing Malnutrition Awareness Week: Fostering Good Practices for Collective Success

Moderators: Konstantina Togka, Silvia Tarantino, Mariana Kalliostra

Silvia Tarantino - ESPEN MAW Manager and NutritionDay Worldwide Manager, discusses the success of last year's Malnutrition Awareness Week (MAW), which involved over 80 countries in activities like webinars, social media campaigns, and Nutrition Day. This year's MAW, from November 15th, will focus on topics such as digestive diseases, medical therapy, patient care, and nutrition diets. The goal is to raise awareness about disease-related malnutrition among healthcare professionals, patients,

students, policymakers, and the general public. ESPEN plans to provide new educational materials, collaborate with PEN societies and ONCA teams, and involve non-nutrition societies to highlight the role of malnutrition in various diseases. Increased patient involvement is also a priority. The ESPEN MAW page offers tools for running independent malnutrition campaigns, including brochures, media kits, social media tools, and webinars. Nutrition Day, scheduled for November 14th, is a global audit on nutritional care, collecting data from healthcare institutions to benchmark and improve practices. Examples from Belgium and Germany show how Nutrition Day data has influenced policy changes and government support. Silvia emphasizes the importance of these tools in improving collaboration and outcomes during MAW.

Luca Cordaro, President of Unione Italiana Food (UIF), discussed UIF's role in the Confindustria System, representing companies specializing in medical nutrition, such as Abbott, B-Braun, Danone, Nutricia, Fresenius Kabi, and Nestlé. These companies work to develop effective solutions for malnutrition in collaboration with scientific societies, institutions, and patient associations. Cordaro highlighted the critical role of content and communication in the industry. UIF has signed a Manifesto to promote the benefits of medical nutrition for disease-related malnutrition and offers its communication expertise to support initiatives in that way. UIF uses various tools, including a LinkedIn page and a website, to reach both the public and specialists. He provided examples of UIF's past work, including a major event organized with stakeholders to discuss oral nutritional supplementation and its importance in patient care. Cordaro emphasized the need for broad communication and collaboration with non-specialized media to raise awareness and address the paradox of nutrition, where attention to diet often diminishes when individuals fall ill.

Marco Scinto, from the Clinical Nutrition Unit in Rome, coordinates the SINPE for Young Working Group. He is presenting SINPE's best practices within the ONCA project. The SINPE website links to the ONCA homepage and highlights ongoing activities like Malnutrition Awareness Week. Last year, SINPE focused on: Educational courses for healthcare professionals; Initiatives during Malnutrition Awareness Week; The "Rarity on Wheels" multinational project; The national congress. ONCA aims



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



to educate healthcare professionals. SINPE offers basic and specialized courses annually, covering topics like ICU nutrition, cancer care, geriatrics, and gastrointestinal issues. SINPE also organized a webinar titled “Joining Forces and Interests in the Fight Against Malnutrition in Italy,” featuring experts and healthcare economists. They launched new courses for young professionals on body composition analysis and created communication materials based on ESPEN fact sheets. The “Rarity on Wheels” project promotes sports for individuals with severe illnesses and involves Italy, Spain, and Poland. At their national congress, SINPE focused on the ONCA project and discussed strategies to tackle malnutrition.

Marianna Kalliostra, the ENHA Communications Officer, provides an update on the ongoing collaboration between ENHA and ONCA. Konstantina, the new ONCA Coordinator, will be a key figure in the Malnutrition Awareness Week and ONCA campaign. Last year's event saw participation from 15 ONCA countries and close work with ESPEN, featuring 100 activities across Europe. The focus is on raising awareness of malnutrition, influencing policy changes, and improving understanding. Effective communication strategies include tailored messaging for different audiences: engaging

narratives for the public, scientific evidence for healthcare professionals, and concise messages for policymakers. Social media and traditional media are crucial for outreach, and collaboration with healthcare associations and patient advocates enhances the effort. Toolkits should be user-friendly and consistent, with infographics and brochures playing a key role. A central website or ONCA's site should house all activities. Data from events like Nutrition Day will help inform policy recommendations, supported by ONCA and ENHA.

Konstantina Togka, ONCA Coordinator. Her role involves facilitating communication between countries and ONCA teams to ensure consistent messaging. ONCA hosts an annual conference and organizes Malnutrition Awareness Week to promote nutrition awareness. This year, activities have included a February webinar for reviewing past events and preparing for the upcoming week, with additional workshops planned for September. Participants are encouraged to plan their own Malnutrition Awareness Week events, choose themes, and schedule activities. They will receive support with campaign logos and will have the opportunity to engage in individual reporting sessions to discuss achievements and prepare for the future. Additionally, participants will be asked to share their social media handles to enhance mutual visibility.

3. Intestinal Failure and Nutrition: Unmet Needs that Resonate with Policymakers

Moderators: Stéphane Schneider and Marek Lichota

Stéphane Schneider, a gastroenterologist and professor of nutrition from East France, led an interactive workshop on intestinal failure (IF). He was joined by Simon Lal, a professor of gastroenterology from Manchester, UK, and Marek Lichota from Krakow, Poland. Schneider highlighted the distinction between well-known organ failures and the lesser-known intestinal failure. He defined IF based on ESPEN's criteria, emphasizing the need for parenteral nutrition and hydration to sustain health and life. He described the three types of IF: acute, subacute, and chronic, detailing their causes and characteristics. Participants discussed the causes of IF, noting that small bowel syndrome is the



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



most common cause. The session also covered the principles of IF therapy, including parenteral support, dietary measures, surgery, and medications, particularly GLP-2 agonists.

Simon Lal pointed out that the common causes of IF vary by country. Schneider then discussed the challenges IF patients face, such as complications from comorbidities, loss of venous access, and impacts on quality of life and professional activities. He shared a story about a patient from Romania who had to move to France for treatment, highlighting the personal and social challenges IF patients endure.

Schneider addressed the unmet needs in treating chronic IF, identified by the former Atlas Group. These included unequal access to treatment, lack of accredited reference centers, inadequate education for stakeholders, insufficient research, and poor home and social care. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive IF network involving multidisciplinary teams and patient advocacy groups to ensure equitable care. The session concluded with a discussion on the future goals for IF care, aiming for equal standards of care across Europe by 2030. Schneider outlined an awareness campaign to advocate for specialized, patient-centered care and improved outcomes, noting disparities in access and reimbursement systems. He stressed the importance of addressing the key gaps in research, reference centers, home and social care, and equitable access to treatment.

Marek Lichota emphasized the importance of establishing a gold standard for healthcare, where patient care is provided in partnership with patients themselves. He highlighted the need to raise awareness about internal failures in healthcare and suggested that focusing on home-parenteral nutrition and sharing patient stories could be effective strategies. He also proposed the creation of centers of excellence to improve care quality and recommended developing resources such as toolkits and social media campaigns to support both patients and healthcare professionals.

Stéphane Schneider discussed plans to integrate the campaign's key messages into national healthcare and nutrition plans across the UK, France, and Portugal. He stressed the importance of creating a manifesto, conducting surveys, developing toolkits, and organizing local forums to enhance advocacy and awareness efforts. Schneider also suggested leveraging social media and local events to spread information about intestinal failure and its associated challenges.

Lichota further elaborated on initiatives to raise awareness, including producing official videos, hashtags, and infographics. He proposed using photography exhibits and other methods to make the invisible nature of intestinal failure more visible. Both Lichota and Schneider agreed on the necessity of local engagement and a follow-up on these initiatives.

The discussion concluded with a call for increased investment in research, better education for healthcare professionals, and the establishment of accredited reference centers to improve care for intestinal failure patients. The speakers emphasized that ensuring equal access to treatment and support for all affected individuals should be a priority.



The Turin ONCA Conference

June 6 & 7 2024



Plenary Round-up

Malnutrition in the European Healthcare Policies – Our Moonshot

Michela Zanetti discussed key drivers for implementing optimal nutritional care at both the EU and global levels, emphasizing strategies to bridge the "know-do" gap—the disconnect between knowledge and practice. She introduced the concept of "nutritional moonshot thinking," which calls for ambitious, collaborative efforts supported by policymakers and facilitated through dialogue among various stakeholders. This approach aims to promote equity in nutritional care and develop coherent fiscal policies. Additionally, Zanetti underscored the critical importance of patient-centered care, advocating for policies that prioritize patient needs and engagement to ensure effective and equitable nutritional interventions.