Self-screening for malnutrition in the community

Background

Malnutrition predisposes to disease, delays recovery from illness and detrimentally affects well-being. Most malnutrition arises and exists in the community, and most of the malnutrition found in hospitals originates from the community. If malnutrition could be identified and treated early it could prevent or reduce suffering from health related problems, dependency on others, and resource use, such as GP visits and hospital admissions.

To help raise awareness of and combat malnutrition BAPEN has developed a range of aids for health and social care personnel working in various care settings. In line with a range of professional and government recommendations to help empower patients and involve them in their care, BAPEN has developed a self-screening tool. This enables them /or their carers identify their risk of malnutrition and to seek advice from their GP and/or other healthcare professionals.

The self-screening calculator

The self-screening calculator included in this website is based on the 'Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool' ('MUST') for adults, the most commonly used nutrition screening tool throughout the UK. ‘MUST’ is a quick to use, validated screening tool, designed to identify adults at risk of malnutrition in all care settings. For further information see http://www.bapen.org.uk/screening-for-malnutrition/must/introducing-must

Studies have shown that patients can effectively screen themselves in outpatient clinics using an electronic version of 'MUST' similar to the one available on this website.

Individuals identified as being at risk of malnutrition, can download a dietary advice sheet which gives them basic information and suggestions for improving their nutritional intake until they receive further advice from a healthcare professional. The dietary advice sheet comes from the ‘Malnutrition Pathway’, developed as a consensus recommendation by a wide range of professional organisations. The pathway provides guidance to GPs and other healthcare professionals on the dietary management of malnutrition in the community. Click here for a copy of the advice sheet and click here to link to the 'Malnutrition Pathway'.


4. Royal College of Physicians. Shared decision making. A summary of learning from the event. A Royal College of Physicians event developed in partnership with the The Health Foundation and the The King's Fund: Royal College of Physicians; 2011.
7. Coulter A, Collins A. Making shared decision- making a reality: No decision about me, without me: The Kings Fund; 2011.