



Letter to the Editor

Reply – Letter to the Editor – The role of specific oral nutritional supplements in polymorbid internal medicine patients on pressure ulcer healing



Dear editor,

We would like to thank Bahat and Erdogan [1] for their interest in our ESPEN guidelines on nutritional support for polymorbid internal medicine patients [2] and for expressing their concerns about the studies we included in the development of recommendation 7.1. This recommendation states that “*In polymorbid medical in-patients with pressure ulcers, specific amino-acids (arginine and glutamine) and b-hydroxy bmethylbutyrate (βHMB) can be added to oral/enteral feeds to accelerate the healing of pressure ulcers (Grade of recommendation 0)*”.

As pointed out by Bahat and Erdogan [1], while developing recommendation 7.1, we included the study from Wong and colleagues [3] because it met our inclusion criteria and, importantly, was performed in an acute care hospital setting. The study by Cereda and colleagues [4], on the other hand, was - after an initial assessment for eligibility - excluded from our guidelines because it was conducted in long-term care residents or patients receiving home care services. However, we did still acknowledge that other positive studies (including the trial from Cereda and colleagues [4]) have been published using an oral nutritional supplement enriched in arginine, zinc and anti-oxidants but are conducted in patients outside the scope of these guidelines.

In addition, as correctly pointed out by Bahat and Erdogan [1], we agree that there is limited evidence to support recommendation 7.1, which is mirrored in the strength of recommendation (grade 0) and the wording “can” (be added) as opposed to “should” or “shall” (further information can be found under section 11 of the standard operating procedures for the development of the ESPEN Guidelines [5]).

Importantly, in contrast to our guidelines focusing on the acute care hospital setting, the recently published ESPEN guideline on clinical nutrition and hydration in geriatrics [6] focuses on older individuals (>65y of age) from all health care and social care settings including the community, outpatients, home-care; nursing home and long-term care residents. These guidelines included the Cereda study [4] in their section III.4 regarding nutritional management of pressure ulcers in older patients. Thus, depending on the patient

population of interest, one or the other guidelines may be more appropriate and the strength of recommendation differs due to number and quality of the underlying evidence and studies included.

References

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15 April 2019