



## Letter to the Editor

## Response to Letter re: Refeeding syndrome in adults receiving total parenteral nutrition: An audit of practice at a tertiary UK centre



Dear Editor,

We thank Wong and Lew [1] for their insightful comments. Refeeding syndrome (RFS) is a condition where definitions are highly heterogeneous among studies; with some relying only on electrolyte disturbances (with different normal ranges) and others also integrating clinical parameters into the definition [2]. These factors contribute to the heterogeneous incidence of RFS [3]. Hypophosphatemia has been commonly used for defining RFS, which is arguably a broader syndrome that also includes other electrolyte abnormalities in addition to clinical symptoms [2].

In our paper [4], we explored hypophosphatemia (with cut-offs from Ahmed et al. [5]), alongside other electrolyte abnormalities, in low and high risk RFS syndrome patients receiving total parenteral nutrition, as defined by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines [6]. Hypophosphatemia was not used as the sole defining criterion for RFS.

According to the definition suggested by Wong and Lew [1] of having serum phosphate level reduced by more than 0.16 mmol/L to below 0.65 mmol/L after initiating nutrition support, six patients (7.5%) experienced RFS by 72 h and ten patients (12.5%) experienced RFS by 168 h. When examining hypophosphatemia with the cut-offs suggested by Wong and Lew [1], distribution is not that dissimilar to the classification we followed (Table 1), with the new hypophosphatemia incidence being 20.0%, which is expected by a decreased lower normal cut-off of 0.71 mmol/L compared to our 0.85 mmol/L. Finally, the complications suggested by Wong and Lew [1] were not analysed as part of the present study

which only examined abnormalities in terms of metabolic measurements and not clinical signs.

## References

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**Table 1**

Phosphate level distribution with cut-offs suggested by Wong and Lew [1].

	Low risk RFS (n = 20)	High risk RFS (n = 60)	Total (n = 80)
Phosphate plasma levels			
Normal/High (>0.71 mmol/L)	20 (100.0%)	44 (73.3%)	64 (80.0%)
Hypophosphatemia	0 (0.0%)	16 (26.7%)	16 (20.0%)
Mild (0.55–0.71 mmol/L)	0 (0.0%)	9 (15.0%)	9 (11.3%)
Moderate (0.32–0.54 mmol/L)	0 (0.0%)	6 (10.0%)	6 (7.5%)
Severe (<0.32 mmol/L)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.7%)	1 (1.2%)

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