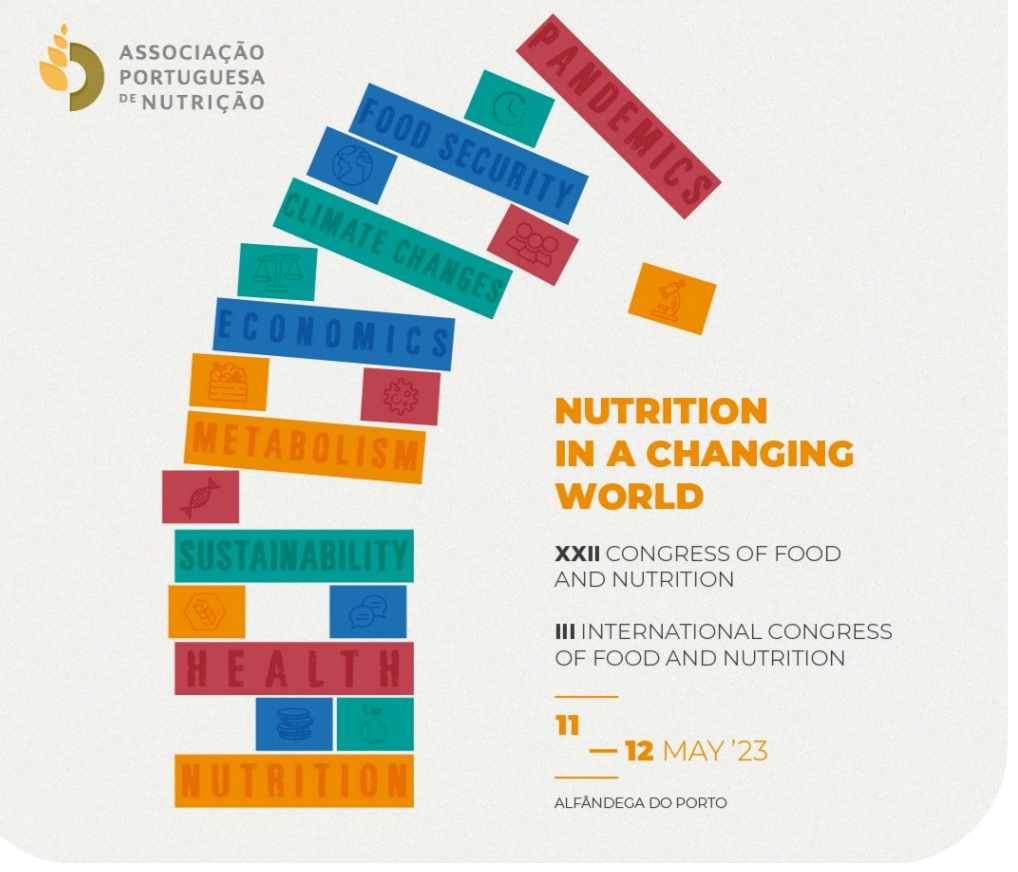


Nutritional assessment of patients in long-term care at Hospital Santa Maria – Porto, and the perceptions of the nursing team



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INTRODUCTION

Worldwide increases in life expectancy entails a higher prevalence in chronic diseases ⁽¹⁾. At the same time, the adult population is increasingly sedentary which conveys a greater risk for potentially fatal and chronic degenerative diseases ⁽²⁾ increasing the probability for long-term care (LTC) ^(3,4). Additionally, malnutrition negatively affects the LTC patient, highlighting the relevance of timely identifying patients at nutritional risk to further prevent the onset/aggravation of pathologies ⁽⁵⁾, through nutritional support prescription. A multidisciplinary team, including the nurse team, is of particular importance for a successful nutritional approach in LTC, since the regular daily proximity to patients, might facilitate recognition of important signs influencing the patient's food intake that, overall, will impact patient nutritional and clinical status ⁽⁶⁾.

OBJECTIVE

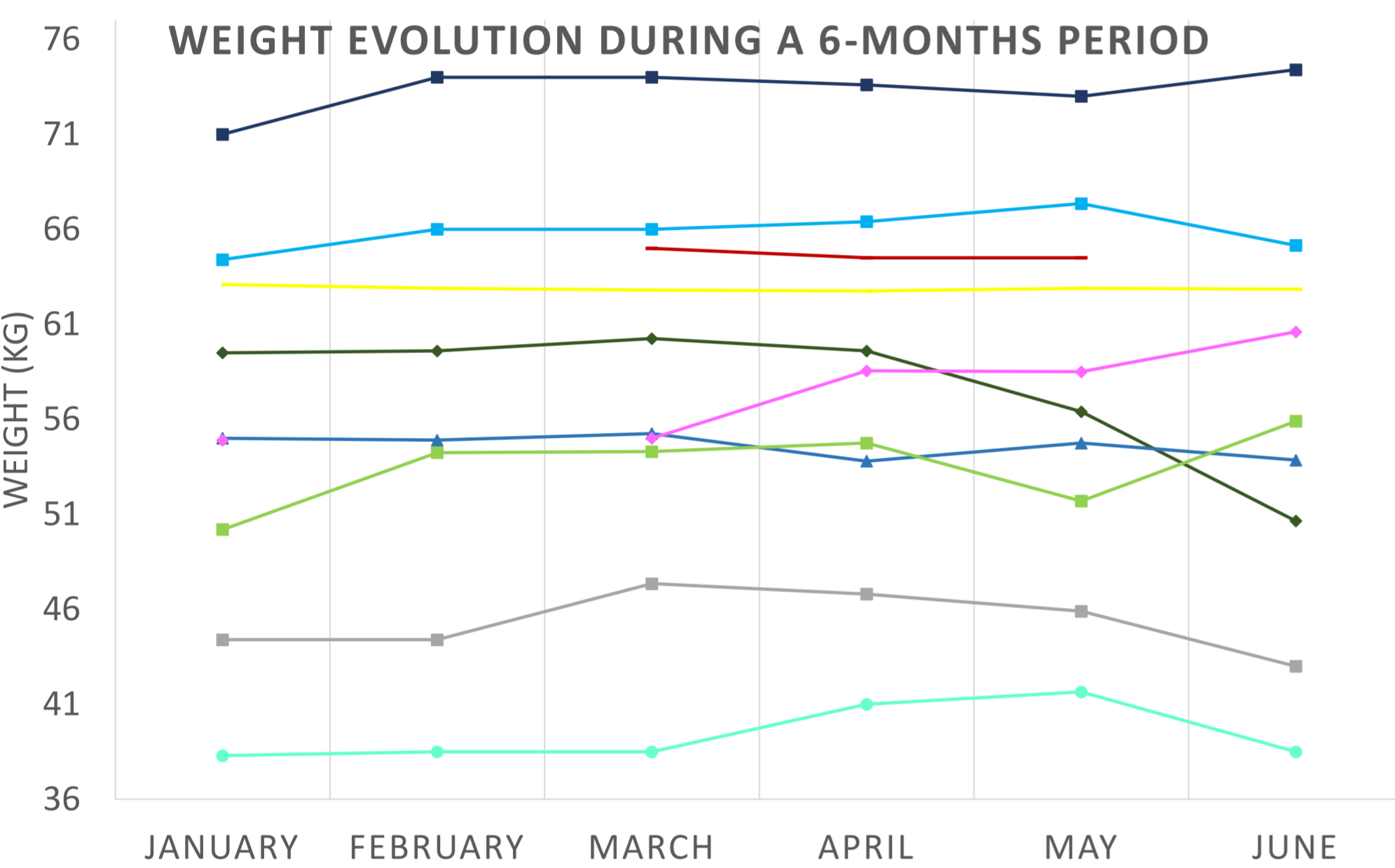
To assess the nutritional status of patients in LTC and the perception of the LTC nursing team regarding certain nutritional aspects.

METHODOLOGY

This observational study was conducted in Hospital Santa Maria (HSM), Porto, Portugal and included: a) a cohort study, and b) a prospective with retrospective data collection and descriptive cross-sectional study. Nutritional status of the enrolled patients (admitted in the HSM LTC, from January to June 2022) was assessed monthly, over a period of 6 months, and included: clinical history, anthropometric and semiological data, and the nutritional risk screening (Mini Nutritional Assessment – Short Form and Nutritional Risk Screening-2002). It was also assessed the nurse team perception, who had daily contact and close access to these LTC patients, using semi-structured questionnaires. This project was approved by the HSM Ethics Committee and the HSM Clinical Director and did not require patients informed consent.

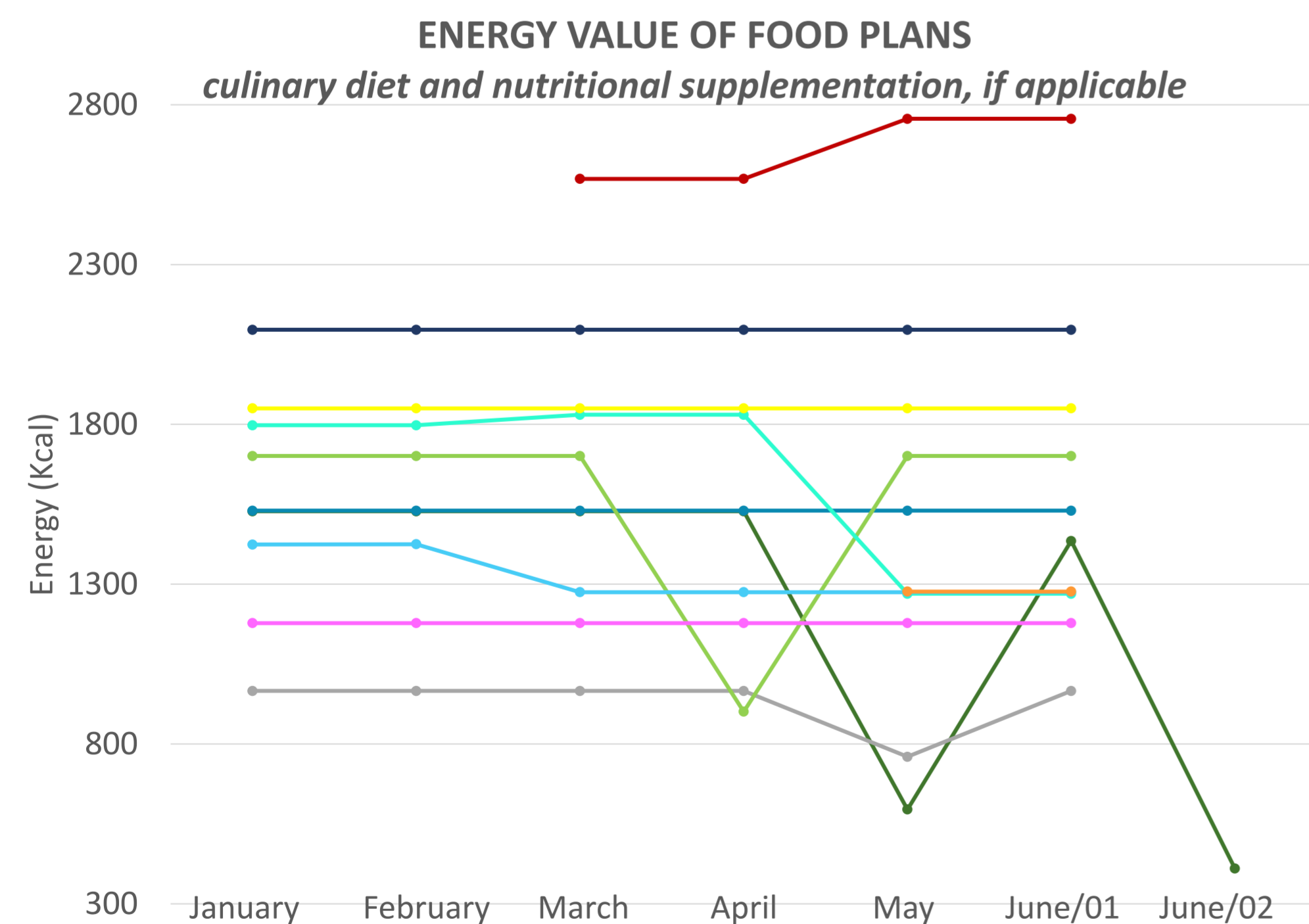
RESULTS

The study included 11 LTC patients, with a median age of 72 years (45-91y), with admissions between 2000 and May 2022; five-male and six-females. All patients were admitted due to neurological problems, from various causes.



Nutritional assessment during 6-months

- Weight fluctuations over time represent a weight loss range between 2-15%;
- 91% of patients (10/11 patients) were at-risk or/and malnourished;
- 54.5% of patients (6/11 patients) were tube feed, 36.4% (4/11 patients) were orally fed with a modified texture diet; and 1-patient was orally fed and by percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) .

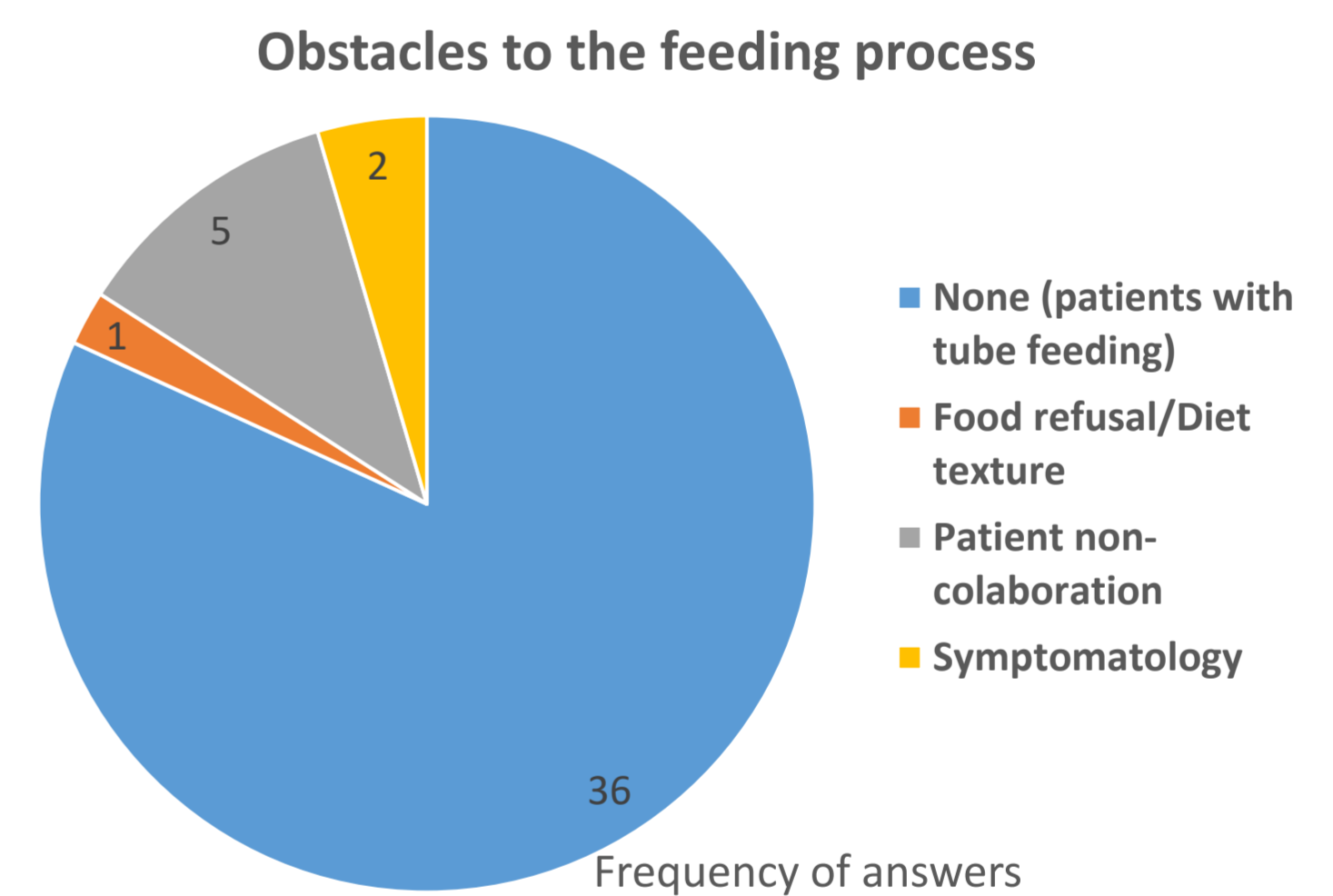


- In April, May and June/02 there were a decreased in energy value of some patients' food plans because the nutritional supplementation was suspended, due to different reasons, but mostly gastrointestinal complications.

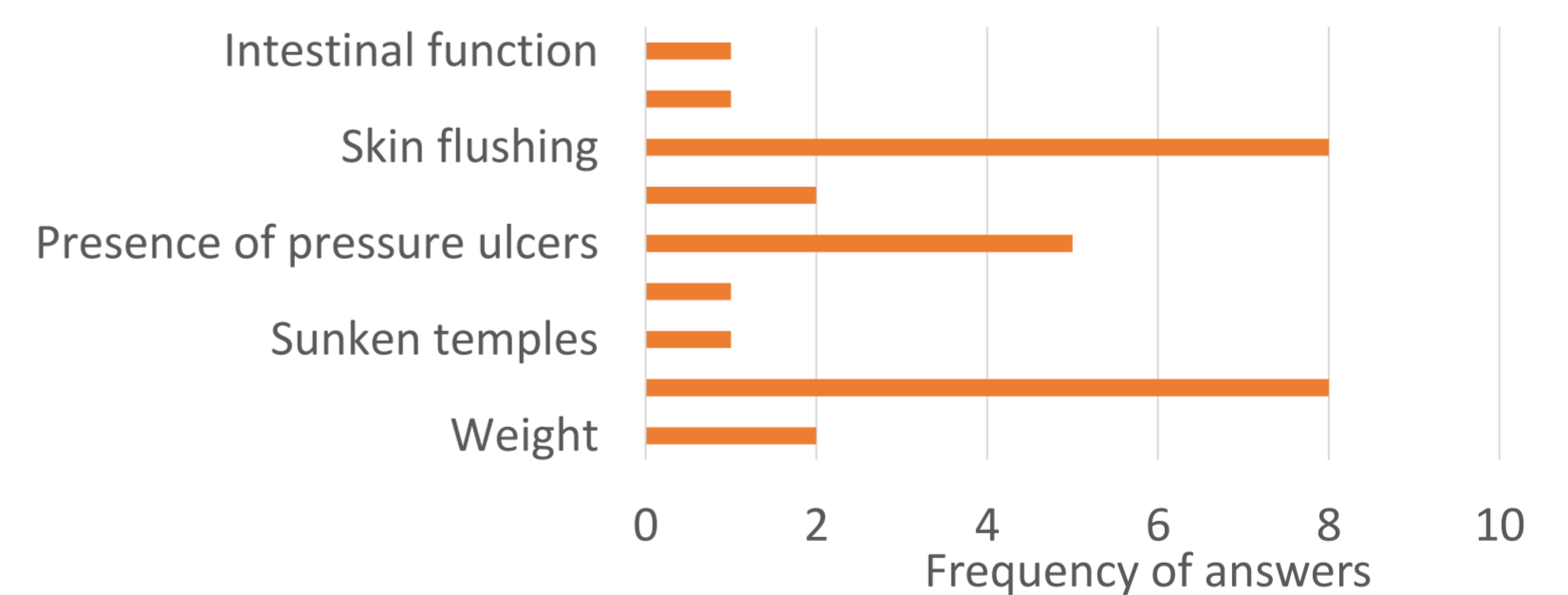
NURSE TEAM PERCEPTIONS DURING A 6-MONTHS PERIOD ON PATIENTS NUTRITIONAL STATUS

A semi-structured questionnaires, with multiple-choice answers, were applied to the twelve nurses (1 male; 11-female, mean age of 43 years (23-60y), that accompanied the enrolled patients. 44-responses were obtained, since the same nurse could have several patients assigned.

Visual perception of patients' nutritional status	Main benefits of nutritional supplementation
Concordance on the results obtained by the body mass index: Underweight; Normal weight; Overweight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight gain • Pressure ulcers healing • Less friable skin • None



Physical evidences of an unbalanced nutritional status



CONCLUSION

The study concluded that hospitalized LTC patients present nutritional risk and malnutrition. The introduction and suspension of nutritional supplements have a significant impact on patients' weight, since it is possible to provide a greater energy-protein intake with the same volume, when compared to a cooking diet. The nursing team lacked some information regarding to nutritional supplements benefits, highlighting the richness of multidisciplinary teams' collaboration in these patients.

More studies with palliative care and LTC should be conducted, as increasing life-threatening chronic pathologies are ever so prevalent.

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