



ABSTRACT

Clinical nutrition and human rights: an international position paper

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Worldwide Societies for Clinical Nutrition have launched a promotional campaign that advocates for all patients to have access to food and evidence-based artificially administered nutrition and hydration (AANH). The campaign is supported by the simultaneous publication of a major position paper in, *Clinical Nutrition* and *Nutrition in Clinical Practice*, the official journals of the European and North American professional societies. The working group of experts in human rights and clinical nutrition, includes representatives of the American Society for Enteral and Parenteral Nutrition (ASPEN), The European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN), Latin American Federation of Nutritional Therapy, Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (FELANPE), Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition Society of Asia (PENSA) and the West African Society of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (WASPEN).

Disease-related malnutrition (DRM) in hospitals remains a highly prevalent form of malnutrition in all countries, despite the fact that evidence-based AANH has progressed sufficiently to permit sick people to be adequately nourished. To be able to transform this reality, the international working group, representing societies from 5 continents, is advocating that “*All patients have the right to nutritional care*” and the human rights-based approach (HRBA) should be incorporated into standard clinical nutrition practice:

The campaign “Nutritional Care is a Human Right” aims at promoting the recognition that:

1. Nutritional Care is intrinsically linked to the Right to Food and the Right to Health.
2. Nutritional Care implies an ethical commitment to our patients to treat DRM.
3. To overcome DRM associated morbidity and mortality, the hospitalized patient must have access to:
 - Screening for nutritional status, diagnosis of risk and nutritional assessment
 - Optimal and timely evidence based AANH
4. Recognition that nutritional care is a human right contributes to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG2) “Hunger Zero”: achieved by including DRM among other types of malnutrition addressed by this goal.

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This campaign comes at a crucial moment when the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that nutritional status appears to be a relevant factor influencing patient outcomes, raising concerns among stakeholders about the consequences of the lack of nutritional care access on the efficiency and financial sustainability of their healthcare systems. The aim is to raise awareness of the general public, patients, health care professionals and governmental policymakers that the right to nutritional care should be a goal of state policies and programmes, regardless of their economic, social, cultural, religious or political background.

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