

Predicted Impact of Dysgeusia

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Description of the initiative

- **Background / context:** Dysgeusia, a distortion of the sense of taste, is not often discussed with patients before or during cancer treatment – two-thirds of patients having chemotherapy suffer from dysgeusia. A common sequela of long-standing dysgeusia is nutritional deficiencies resulting from altered dietary intake patterns. Dysgeusia and malnutrition negatively impact the quality of life, recovery capacity, treatment outcomes and treatment toxicities. It is estimated that up to 10-20% of cancer patients die due to malnutrition consequences rather than the tumour itself.
- **Rationale for the initiative:** What if the impact of an individual's quality of life and nutrition due to dysgeusia can be predicted before the initial start of a treatment? In that case, this may help reduce the prevalence of malnutrition risk, improve treatment outcomes and achieve health economic benefits. Reducing the prevalence of malnutrition based on prediction will involve collaboration with multidisciplinary stakeholders (medical staff, nurses, dietitians, pharmacologists, chefs, patients and carers). The project's outcome may prove beneficial in underlining the benefits of education on dysgeusia for medical students and healthcare professionals. Furthermore, the aim is to foster innovative strategies to advance nutritional care in clinical practice. Moreover, the project will facilitate a unique collaboration between relevant stakeholders.
- **Objectives and scope:**
 - Using a questionnaire to predict the possible impact on quality of life caused by dysgeusia and the risk of malnutrition in patients diagnosed with cancer.
 - Define what interventions can be effective at an early stage in cancer diagnosis and early treatment based on the data from the questionnaires.
 - Clarify the role of dietitians in this process and further define how they need to be involved in an interdisciplinary team from the onset in patient care.

Planned activities & deliverables

- Determine the population based on cancer type, stage and prevalence of malnutrition
- Develop a questionnaire in the coming four months to obtain a baseline to assess and measure:
 - quality of life relating to taste perception, lifestyle and nutrition
 - the exigency for nutritional support and analyses the effectiveness of the nutritional intervention
- During 18 months, measure the effectiveness of nutrition intervention and the impact on quality of life using the developed questionnaire and the designed baseline
- Data storage in accordance with privacy regulations
- Determine inclusive and exclusive criteria's for partaking in the questionnaire and study

Resources & enablers

- Development and validation of the questionnaire by a multidisciplinary team consisting of medical staff, nurses, dietitians, pharmacologists, chefs, patients and carers. € 10,000
- Recruitment of the target population. € 5,000
- Evaluate, analyze, reporting. € 10,000
- Development of nutritional interventions by the multidisciplinary team. € 5,000

Results/outcomes & expected impact

- **Improve or maintain quality of life for patients in cancer care and during cancer treatment**
- **Prevent malnutrition, improve & maintain recovery capacity during cancer treatment**
- **By putting this topic on the agenda with all relevant stakeholders, interdisciplinary care for patients will be improved**
- **The clarified role of and improved collaboration with dietitians from the diagnosis and start of the treatment will enhance the care of patients within the EU.**