



Canadian  
Malnutrition  
Task Force™

le Groupe de  
travail canadien  
sur la malnutrition<sup>MC</sup>

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A Précis of the publication: *Costs of hospital malnutrition*

Lori Curtis, Paule Bernier, Khursheed Jeejeebhoy, Johane Allard, Donald Duerksen, Leah Gramlich, Manon Laporte and Heather Keller. *Clinical Nutrition*, published online September 2016. DOI: [10.1016/j.clnu.2016.09.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clnu.2016.09.009)

In a previous manuscript, the Nutrition Care in Canadian Hospitals (NCCH) study revealed that the prevalence of malnutrition (SGA B + C) in adults admitted to Canadian hospitals, who stay more than 2 days, is 45%. Additional data were collected during the study period to ascertain the cost of malnutrition, specifically attributed to a longer length of stay. Two of the aims of this study were to determine the relationship between malnutrition and additional costs due to a longer length of stay and the influence of confounders\* on this relationship. Potential additional costs due to further interventions or treatments was not counted.

**Key Findings:**

Medical stays increased by 23%, and surgical stays by 32% for a moderately malnourished patient, translating to an additional cost of, on average, between 31% and 34% as compared to well-nourished patients with similar characteristics. Severely malnourished patients (11% of surveyed patients) stayed 34% longer and had 38% higher total costs than well-nourished patients. Malnourished patients in medical beds stayed 53% longer and had 55% higher medical costs, on average.

**Clinical relevance:**

Malnourished patients' stay was approximately 3 days longer in hospital than nourished patients, costing the health care system substantially more. In 2012 dollars, this amounted to \$1500 - \$2000 per malnourished patient. This analysis demonstrated that malnutrition is independently associated with length of stay and hospital costs. A problem that is easily prevented, identified and treated.

Please visit the CMTF web site [nutritioncareinCanada.ca](http://nutritioncareinCanada.ca) to find a PowerPoint template to use in presenting your hospital costs of malnutrition to decision makers: <http://nutritioncareinCanada.ca/tools/tools-for-your-practice/communications/decision-makers>

\*Confounding is the illusory association between two variables when in fact no such association exists. It is caused by a third variable (the confounder), which is correlated with the first two.

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