**Nursing Care of the Client with Malnourishment**

Learning Activity: Week 3

**Overview:**

Ensuring that our body's fluids and electrolytes are in balance is crucial for life and homeostasis. Homeostasis is defined as “the state of equilibrium in the internal environment of the body” (Lewis et al., 2014). Preventing and managing fluid and electrolyte imbalances is common for nurses in the all areas of practice. Nurses must understand the fundamental concepts of body fluid and electrolytes and be able to anticipate the potential for fluid and electrolyte imbalances. Additionally, nurses should be knowledgeable of the signs and symptoms, treatment, and prevention of each of these imbalances.

Malnutrition can be defined as an “excess, deficit, or imbalance in the essential components of a balanced diet” including both *undernutrition* and *over-nutrition* (Lewis, et al., 2014). Poor nutrition is a preventable risk factor for major chronic diseases and is often associated with other social determinants such as education, Aboriginal status, social exclusion, and income. In 2008/2009, 34% of Canadians aged 65 or older were found to be at nutritional risk (Stats Canada, 2015). In Canada, malnutrition is a common occurrence in acute care hospitals, which can be exacerbated during their hospital stay (Keller, et al., 2014). As well, malnutrition of clients can be associated with increased morbidity, mortality and patient readmission, increasing health care costs and effecting patients and their families. Malnutrition within the acute care setting has multifactorial causes, requiring collaboration of health care team members, and the need for early recognition and treatment.

***Concepts:***

* *Transition and Change*
* *Collaboration*
* *Accountability*

**Learning Outcomes:**

* Identify the related concepts of transition and change, collaboration, and accountability in relation to fluid and electrolyte imbalances and malnourishment
* Understand the Nursing care required to care for the various fluid and electrolyte imbalances
* Understand the nursing care required to care for a malnourished client

**In Preparation:**

1. Review your notes from HLSC 2650 on fluid and electrolytes
2. Read: Lewis, S., Heitkemper, M., Dirksen, S., Bucher, L. & Camera, I. (Eds.). (2014). *Medical-Surgical Nursing in Canada* (3rd Cdn ed.). Toronto: Elsevier Chapter 42: pages 1068 (start at “Nutrition related health conditions”) to 1076 (stop at “Types of specialized Nutrition Support”)
3. **Rist, G., Miles, G. and Karimi,L. (2012). The presence of malnutrition in community-living older adults receiving home nursing services. *Nutrition and Dietetics*; 69: 46-50**

**In Classroom:**

* Listen critically to the presentation on care of the client with fluid and electrolyte imbalances and care of the malnourished client
* Explore the concepts of collaboration, accountability, and decision making in regards to this type of client
* Participate in discussion of the article
* Participate in classroom activity

**In Reflection:**

* In clinical, examine your patients past nutritional state, their current nutritional needs and their future nutritional needs. Based on your client’s age and stage of development, are their needs being met? What can you do as their nurse to ensure their nutritional needs are being met?

**REFERENCES**

Lewis, S., Heitkemper, M., Dirksen, S., Bucher, L. & Camera, I. (Eds.). (2014). *Medical-*

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Causes of Malnutrition in Canadian Hospitals: Results of a Canadian Malnutrition Task Force Survey. *Journal of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition*, 20(10), 1-7. DOI: 10.1177/0148607114548227

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