Reviewer’s report

Title: Association between delivery methods for enteral nutrition and physical status among older adults

Version: 0 Date: 06 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Judi Porter

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. It is an interesting topic, well done to authors for your work. Some comments on the manuscript follow:

I suggest that the terminology for "elderly" is replaced with "older adult".

I am not convinced that a retrospective analysis of data can, as you suggest in the abstract conclusion, provide evidence of causative effect. Please reword this conclusion carefully taking care not to overstate your findings and their interpretation. Eg. within clinical decision making PEG feeding may be offered to the most mobile/ambulatory patients.

Keywords: I do not think that end-of-life care is justified as a keyword, there is no focus on this throughout the manuscript.

Introduction

Page 4, line 5: I suggest that the discussions regarding choice of enteral nutrition should be extended beyond the physicians. How many hours of nutrition training do medical staff receive? - some estimates are less than 10 hours across their training. Dietitians however have full qualifications in nutrition, and should be recognised as the experts in nutrition.

The aim "aimed to investigate the change in physical function of patients following enteral nutrition and to compare the difference between the feeding methods" is completely at odds with the primary outcomes. Your focus is not on changes in physical function, but rather death/bedridden status. The aim should be revised to align with the primary outcomes, or, the primary outcomes should be changed to measures of physical function.

Methods

I am unable to assess the "multiple imputation by chained equation" modelling for missing values. The journal statistical editor should be consulted.

Results
Page 7, line 31 Again the discussions between physicians, patients and families seems to have a rather out of date medical focus. What was the contribution by the broader interprofessional team to the decision making of enteral feeds?

Table 1

Demographics: BMI only is reported, not weight or estimated energy requirements. You report a statistically significant difference between 24 prescribed dose of enteral nutrition. What was the estimated requirements for the participants? What proportion were receiving combination oral intake via food/fluids? These factors need to be considered to place these figures within a practical context. It seems that there is no dietitian on the authorship team and therefore these aspects have been overlooked in the report.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I recommend additional statistical review

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