

Oral Supplement Consumption and Waste among Gastrointestinal and Liver Patients

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Abstract

Background: Oral supplementation (Ensure, Glucerna, Resource) is common among hospitalized individuals. Experimental studies prove that oral supplementation improves nutritional status, reduces complications and mortality, and contributes to decreased cost of healthcare among malnourished individuals. Oral supplement waste is a common phenomenon in hospital settings. Cost of wasted oral supplements is a pertinent issue; unused and partially consumed cans add to the ever-present budget dilemmas.

Objective: The objectives of this study were to measure oral supplement consumption and waste among hospitalized patients, and calculate the cost that was associated with the wasted supplement.

Methods: Fourteen gastrointestinal and liver patients on oral supplements were analyzed for the duration they were on an oral supplement. Variables measured were supplement type, amount consumed, number of cans wasted, and reasons patients' chose not to consume the supplement. In-services were given to the staff to ensure understanding of the research. Nurses recorded the data on a designated form. A dietitian placed the forms on the clipboards, and the nurse manager reminded the nurses to record the information.

Results: Fifty percent of oral supplements were wasted, which amounted to a loss of \$15.51. Patients chose not to consume supplements because they did not like the taste, they were too full, and/or they were sleeping.

Conclusions: The study confirms that supplement waste is a recurrent issue and contributes to financial dilemmas in a hospital setting. Because taste was a major reason why supplements were not consumed, alternate brands and flavors should be considered for use among patient populations.