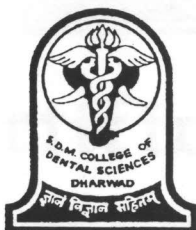


ENTERAL NUTRITION IN PATIENTS WITH HEAD AND NECK CANCER



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According to World Health Organization health is defined as a positive sense of physical, mental and social well being. The state of health is often compromised by the abnormalities in the nutritional status, which is especially true in chronically ill patients undergoing major surgery.

Studies have shown that the incidence of malnutrition is about 50% in hospitalized patients. Unfortunately, most of these deficiencies go unrecognized (G.L. Hill et al 1977)²⁴.

The incidence of malnutrition in head and neck cancer patients has been estimated to be about 30%-60% at the time of diagnosis. This depends largely on the specific characteristics of the individual tumor including type, location and stage (Chuan Bin Guo, 1994)¹⁹.

According to Deirdetoomey et al 1995³⁵, in addition to metabolic nutritional deficiencies, patients with malignant head and neck neoplasms may also suffer from distortion of normal anatomic nutritional pathways, poor nutritional intake due to dysphagia, adynophagia, anorexia and deficiencies associated with excess smoking and alcohol intake.

In addition to the above, cancer treatment like surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy increase metabolic demands which