

Scenario:

An 83-year-old resident of a skilled nursing facility presents to the emergency department with generalized edema of extremities and abdomen. History obtained from staff reveals the patient has a history of malabsorption syndrome and difficulty eating due to a lack of dentures. The patient has been diagnosed with protein malnutrition.

Many older adults deal with the problem of malnutrition which predisposes them to increased infections, diseases and malabsorption syndrome. Malabsorption is a nutrient absorption problem. The patient in the scenario presented with generalized edema of all extremities, difficulty eating, history of malabsorption diagnosed with protein malnutrition.

Dealing with protein malnutrition, malabsorption syndrome & may alter the functions of the gut microbiota which may affect the patient's liver or kidney function. It may also affect the patient's ability to secrete the needed enzymes in the digestive tract. According to McCance & Huether (2019), Malabsorption syndrome affects the small intestine by disrupting the gastric and intestinal mucosa (p.1336).

The role of genetics in protein malnutrition cannot be overlooked because protein is the body's building block. It plays a huge role in supporting good health, and building the patient's immunity. Protein are complex molecules critical in the body. Patient needs foods rich in protein, because lack of protein leads to malnutrition and muscle wasting (Chan et al, 2023).

The patient presented with the symptoms of weakness and edema as a result of her lack of protein. It is obvious that patient's inability or difficulty eating due to her lack of denture is as a result of protein malnutrition. It is the lack of protein that is affecting the patient's kidneys which in turn leading to her generalized edema. Foods rich in protein such as chicken, nuts salmon, beef should be prescribed by her nutritionist and her swallowing and chewing ability should be evaluated to help reduce malnutrition.

The physiologic response to the stimulus presented in the scenario is the patient's malabsorption of protein, extremity edema because the patient's lack of protein is causing irregular exchange of fluid through the kidney which is causing edema (Ji Ah, song, 2023). The Endothelial cells are involved in the process which is the reason for the edema the patient presented with. Gender and genetics will change my response because protein malabsorption may affect a patient based on age and gender. On a final note, physicians should educate patients on the importance of protein as the body's building block because the body uses amino acid to repair bones thereby preventing osteoporosis and also protein rich foods play a vital role in preventing pressure ulcers in elderly.

References

Chan, H. C. N., Fei, X., Leung, E. L. Y., Langston, K., Marshall, S., & van der Meij, B. S. (2023). Post-discharge consequences of protein-energy malnutrition, sarcopenia, and frailty in older adults admitted to rehabilitation: A systematic review. *Clinical Nutrition ESPEN*, 54, 382–397. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clnesp.2023.01.023>Links to an external site.