

# Malnutrition screening of hospital patients common but hospitals failing on nutrition care

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A new study gives hospitals overall good marks for conducting nutrition screenings within 24 hours of a patient's admission, but finds that many need to improve other practices to be more effective.

The study, conducted by the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (A.S.P.E.N.) and published today in A.S.P.E.N.'s *Nutrition in Clinical Practice* journal, found that while most respondents said that screening patients for malnutrition was being done in compliance with The Joint Commission mandate of 1995, fewer than half were familiar with the 2012 Consensus Statement from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics/A.S.P.E.N., which recommends specific markers and characteristics for diagnosis of malnutrition.

"Nutrition is a key component of any patient's overall health and of their post-hospitalization recovery," said the study's co-author Peggi Guenter, PhD, RN, A.S.P.E.N.'s Senior Director of Clinical Practice, Quality, and Advocacy. "While it is good news to find that hospitals are complying with the [nutrition](#) screening mandate, it is discouraging to see such disparity between facilities in how they conduct the follow-up assessment, diagnosis, and intervention."

A lack of clinician participation in the nutrition care process along with an inconsistent knowledge and use of available tools and insufficient training of caregivers to identify and treat malnutrition in [patients](#) were

also found to be a problem among hospitals.

The survey authors call for professional medical societies to further educate their members on the issue of [malnutrition](#) and for additional studies and audits of existing practices to determine ideal practices for nutrition care plans. A.S.P.E.N. also believes that the results of this study support the need for a nationally standardized approach to nutrition assessment, diagnosis, and care.

Provided by American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition

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