

PERIOD OF FASTING BY PEDIATRIC ONCOLOGIC PATIENTS SUBMITTED TO RADIOTHERAPY UNDER SEDATION AND COMPLAINTS RELATED TO IRRITABILITY AND SENSE OF HUNGER.

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Background: Radiotherapy is usually a short procedure, but the patient has to lie still and cannot be accompanied. Some children have difficulty in being still, and the use of sedation is necessary. To sedate patients submitted to radiotherapy in our hospital, it was established an eight-hour fast before the procedure.

Objective: To find out the period of fasting done by the pediatric patients, submitted to radiotherapy under sedation and their main complaints related to humor and sense of hunger during this period.

Methodology: Restrospective analysis of patients attending the outpatient Nutrition Clinic of a Specialized Oncology Center.

Results: Twenty-three patients, ranging from 3 to 13 years old, were evaluated. Among the main diagnosis there were the tumors of the central nervous system, rhabdomyosarcomas and Wilms Tumor. The head/neuroaxis and abdomen were the most relevant irradiated places. The average number of sessions were 20.5 ranging between 8 and 33 sessions. The nutritional diagnosis based on body mass index during the radiotherapy are shown in Figure 1. The real period of fasting was an average of 14 hours, considering the time of the last meal before the procedure until the patient was released to eat. The most frequent complaints were irritability (69.5%) and irritability with sense of hunger (17.4%) – Table 1.

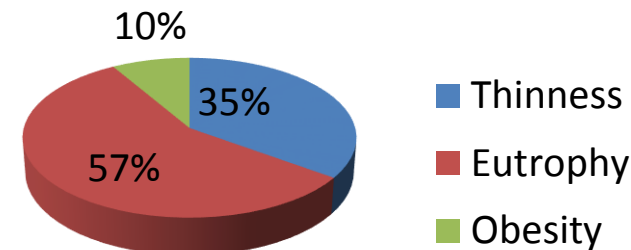


Figure 1: Nutritional diagnosis based on body mass index

Reported Complaints	N	%
Irritability	16	69,5
Irritability with sense of hunger	4	17,4
Sense of hunger	1	4,4
No complaints	2	8,7
Total	23	100

Table 1: Reported complaints by patients undergoing fasting.

Conclusion: Despite all the new recommendations, the shortening of the period of fasting is still challenge as it entails breaking paradigms. The described complications related to a long period of fasting are based on the need to set specific protocols to shorten the period of fasting in pediatric oncologic patients. The use of the strategy to shorten the period of fasting can provide benefits to these patients with regard to nutritional status, resulting in a relief from the complications and an improvement in the quality of life.