

Malnutrition, Depression and Dependence of Caregivers in Elderly Receiving Geriatric Support

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Introduction

The prevalence of malnutrition in elderly population is high, which may result from multiple and cumulative chronic diseases,^(1; 2) as anorexia, chewing difficulty and dysphagia.^(3; 4) Other factors and conditions can influence the health of the elderly, like Depression and the need of a caregiver.^(5;6) These factors demonstrate correlation, because the elderly who have depression are more likely caregiver dependency and have increased risk of malnutrition,⁽⁷⁾ as well as the elderly dependent of caregiver may be more likely to develop malnutrition⁽⁸⁾ and depression, which means a dependent relationship between these three factors.

Objectives

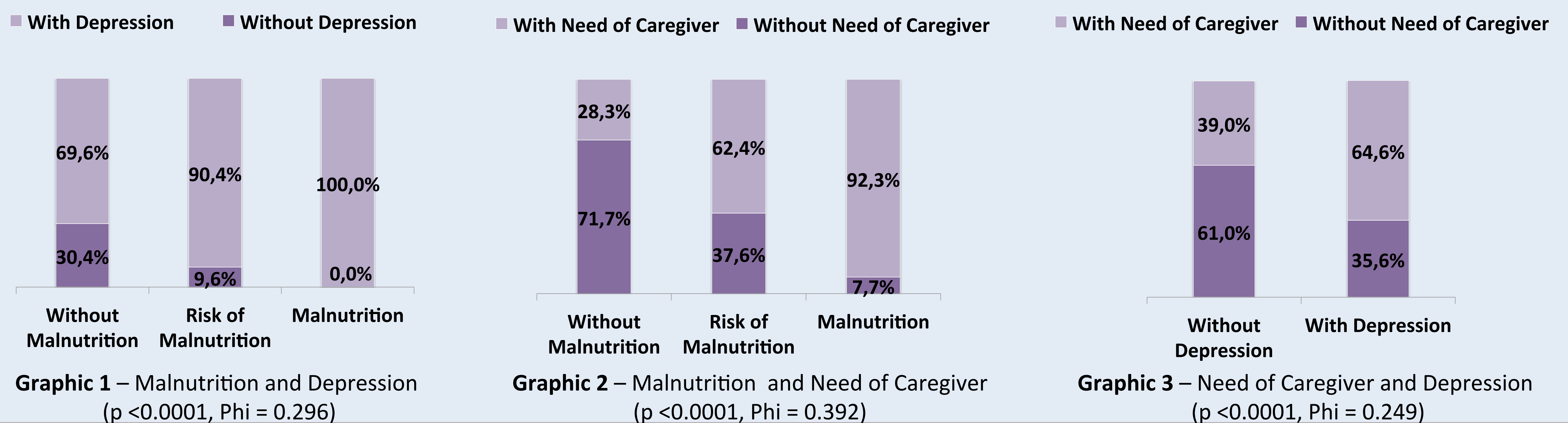
This study aims to determine the Prevalence of Malnutrition, Depression and the Need of Caregiver in the elderly, and study the association between them.

Methods

It was made a cross-sectional study with subjects aged greater or equal to 65 years in 8 geriatric institutions of Braganza. The Malnutrition risk was evaluated with the Mini Nutritional Assessment (MNA),⁽⁹⁾ Depression was evaluated with the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS),^(10;11) and the subjects were questioned about their ability and autonomy in daily activities, to evaluate the Need of Caregiver. To do all the statistical analysis it was used the statistical program SPSS 17.0.

Results

The sample included 197 elderly (67,5% female) with a mean age of 83 ± 6 years (65-96). 23.4% of subjects had no Malnutrition, while 63.5% of subjects were at risk of Malnutrition and 13.2% were malnourished. The prevalence of Depression was 86.8% and 58.4% had Need of Caregiver. After statistical analysis performed by Qui-Square Test, it was possible to verify that Malnutrition is associated with Depression ($p < 0.0001$, $\Phi = 0.296$) and with the Need of Caregiver ($p < 0.0001$, $\Phi = 0.392$) and Depression is associated with the Need of Caregiver ($p < 0.0001$, $\Phi = 0.249$).



Conclusion

This study showed a high prevalence of Malnutrition, Need of Caregiver and Depression among elderly and the existence of a relationship between these variables. Thus, malnutrition in the elderly can influence their emotional status and their autonomy to do their daily activities, or be influenced by these factors. So it's important to assess and to treat these conditions, in order to improve the health of this population.

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