



The Role of Immunonutrition: Immune Development and Disease Prevention

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Message from the Guest Editors

Cancer is known to break the metabolic balance and immunological competence, leading to a decreased response to surgical injury and favouring tumour relapse, progression and tissue invasion. Oncological patients have a higher risk of malnutrition because of reduced food intake as well as disease-related pathologies such as increased muscular catabolism and chronic inflammation, which may aggravate their nutritional status. Although many studies present non-conclusive or conflicting results, comparing different timings of nutritional intervention, it is generally agreed that preoperative nutrition is most beneficial for surgical patients. ESPEN guidelines suggest the beginning of EIN from seven days before surgery for malnourished patients even if the operation has to be delayed.

A better understanding of the impact of immune nutrition on cancer destiny may open new therapeutic options. In fact, in the near future, we could potentially identify the subgroup of tumours that are more responsive to immunotherapy and use immunonutrition as an enhancer of the therapies already included in the usual guidelines as chemotherapy or surgery.





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