



# The development of a nutrition care pathway for patients undergoing surgery for upper gastrointestinal cancer

Irene Deftereos, Vanessa Carter, Jasmine Everist, Kathryn Pierce  
Nutrition Department; Western Health, Melbourne, Australia.

## Background

Malnutrition is a significant problem for Upper Gastrointestinal (UGI) cancer patients, and guidelines recommend perioperative nutritional intervention. In 2016, Western Health Dietetics established a UGI Nutrition Clinic alongside UGI surgical oncology clinics, with a Nutrition Care Pathway (NCP) aiming to address service gaps.

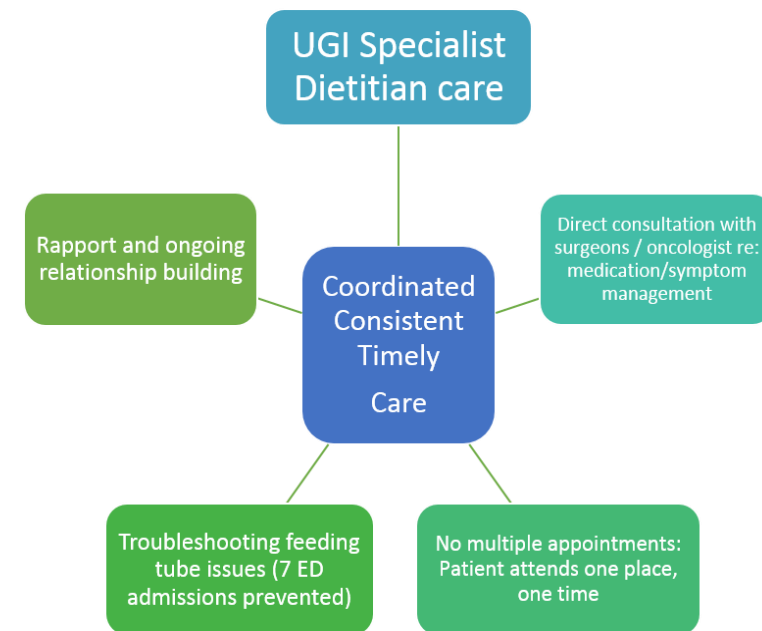
## Methods

A retrospective audit was conducted of patients who had undergone curative intent surgery for gastric, oesophageal or pancreatic cancer, 12 months pre (group 1) and post (group 2) NCP implementation.

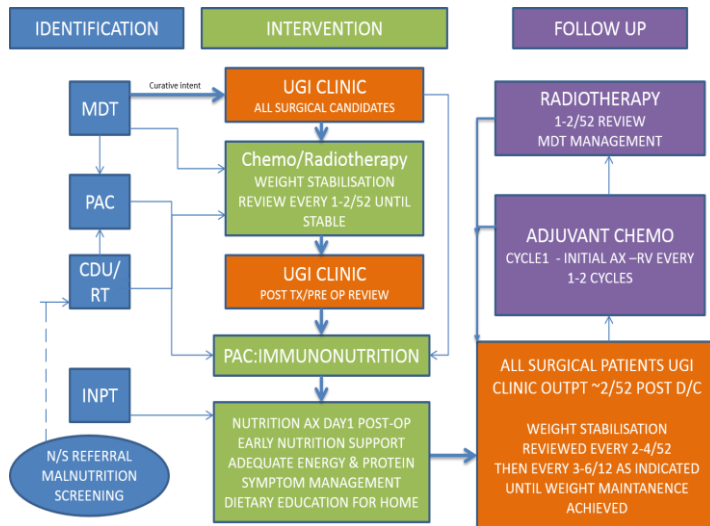
## Results

Age, BMI, gender and tumour types were similar in Group 1 (n=32) versus Group 2 (n=30).

## The UGI Nutrition Clinic: A platform for patient centred, MDT management of nutrition



## WH UGI Oncology Nutrition Care Pathway



**60%** in Group 2 received nutrition assessment at time of diagnosis, compared **to 25%** in Group 1. Dietitian input in radiotherapy/chemotherapy increased from **78% to 100%**. 78% of patients received review post neoadjuvant therapy, previously not provided. Average dietetic outpatient time pre surgery increased from **2 minutes** pre implementation **to 35 minutes**. Average occasions of service (OOS) pre surgery increased from **1.7 to 4.5**. **93%** received nutrition follow up within 3 weeks post discharge, compared **to 15%** pre implementation. **4 hospital admissions** for feeding tube issues were avoided. Percentage weight loss was not different, contributed to by missing data.

## Significance to allied health

Patients now have access to coordinated, consistent, timely, effective nutrition care reflecting best practice. A process driven, pathway approach linking with pre-existing appointments can ensure a patient centred, multi disciplinary and sustainable model of care.

Contact: [irene.deftereos@wh.org.au](mailto:irene.deftereos@wh.org.au)