

# Malnutrition Prevalence at Northern Health 2020



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## Background

- Malnutrition affects up to 40% of acute inpatients in Australian hospitals
- Malnutrition weakens the immune system, slows the healing of wounds, causes muscle loss, and increases length of hospital stay and risk of mortality
- At Northern Health (NH) patients are screened for malnutrition risk (using the Malnutrition Screening Tool) and weighed on admission and weekly thereafter. The NH Key Performance Indicator (KPI) target for these tasks is  $\geq 80\%$  compliance. When a patient is identified as at risk of malnutrition, a referral to the Dietetics service for further assessment and intervention is required
- Malnourished patients may go undiagnosed and untreated (termed 'missed' malnourished) when screening and weighing does not take place, or referrals to Dietetics does not occur

## Our questions

1. How many acute inpatients at NH are malnourished?
2. How many malnourished patients are being 'missed'?
3. What percentage of patients are being screening for malnutrition risk?
4. What percentage of patients are being weighed?



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## Methods

- This rolling audit collected data from patients on the acute inpatient wards across the Northern Hospital Epping (NHE) and Broadmeadows Hospital (BH) sites continuously over a three month period (NHE = 8 wards, BH = 2 wards; total of 10 wards)
- Auditors screened the medical file and the nursing inpatient paperwork, and where indicated, completed the Malnutrition Screening Tool (MST) and Subjective Global Assessment (SGA) to diagnose malnutrition.
- ‘Missed’ malnourished patients were referred to the Dietetics service to provide nutrition intervention

## Results



