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Dietary intervention assessment in cases of patients suffering from lymphedema and lipedema – case study

Key words: body fat percentage, obesity, nutritional mistakes, diet

Introductions: In cases of lymphedema and lipedema, the use of caloric restrictions and introducing physical activity do not cause the expected results – there is no edema reduction. Patients' nutritional status assessment is used to determine the level of obesity and fat distribution in the body. The goal of treating patients is achieving healthy body weight, because overweight and obesity can contribute to further obesity increase. Measuring resting metabolism by indirect calorimetry allows us to calculate the actual energy demand and determine the energy value of a diet. The use of a balanced diet with proper calories and low content of refined carbohydrates which is rich in anti-inflammatory ingredients is intended for the reduction of edema these patients suffer from.

Aim: Assessing the effectiveness of dietary intervention in reducing lymphedema and lipedema.

Case description: We describe a case of a 52-year-old patient with lipedema and lymphedema. Woman came to a dietician to verify her diets, define nutritional mistakes as well as to gather information and suggestions on how to act in order to decrease body fat in their limbs. In that case an excess of fat was found in the lower limbs. The resting metabolism measured by indirect calorimetry was 2316 kcal. The patient received diet equal to 1800 kcal per day. After 6 months her body weight dropped by 18.5 kg, total body fat went down by 4.0% - left leg 2.21 kg, right leg 2.21 kg and visceral fat by 2. Her waist circumference decreased by 23.0 cm and hip circumference - 11.5 cm. Additionally, thigh circumference decreased by 7.0 cm and calf circumference – 5.5 cm.

Results: The prescribed dietary intervention turned out effective with lymphedema and lipedema patients. The effect was decreased body weight, lower body fat in affected body limbs and diminished visceral fat.

Conclusions: Authors of countless research papers point to nutritional recommendations as ways to treat lymphedema and lipedema patients. The disease makes it difficult to define the real energy demand, thus hindering applying a diet that would help to reduce body weight. Suggested body weight control should be based on a properly balanced nutritional plan designed for a particular patient. Additionally, it is necessary to define which elements of the diet have influence on edema, due to the fact there are no reports on the effectiveness that diet can have on lymphedema and lipedema reduction. It is advisable to continue research and observations that would consider the relations between diet applied and the size of lymphedema and lipedema.