

Accreditation of Clinical Nutrition Teams

Motivation of passive teams to become active

Osman Abbasoglu, Kutay Demirkan, Meltem Halil, Sezin Asik Akman, Guzin Tumer,

Kursat Gundogan, Murat Gunduz, Mutlu Doganay

Contact (Osman Abbasoglu, President of Turkish PEN Society-KEPAN, osmanabbasoglu@yahoo.com)



Description of the initiative

- **Background / context:** Accreditation is a process whereby an organization is assessed on a set of pre-determined standards. It intends to promote quality improvement through diverse approaches. Accreditation of hospitals or some specific departments such as general surgery or intensive care unit regarding their nutritional assessment and management takes place either mandated by the government, or voluntarily initiated by independent (inter)national agencies and associations. However, accreditation of clinical nutrition teams (CNT) is not performed at the moment. Additionally, effective management of malnutrition, especially in pandemic processes such as COVID-19, is vital and critical.
- **Rationale for the initiative:** To establish an accreditation of CNTs has been recommended by the ESPEN Executive Committee last year. In Turkey, due to the memorandum of the Ministry of Health (MoH), since 2010 every hospital established their CNTs. However most of these CNTs are filed as a document remaining theoretical rather than being active in clinical practice. Implementation of CNT accreditation is expected to motivate the competition of hospitals, and CNTs will become more active which would be beneficial in improvement of patient outcomes and screening, leading to significant reduction in prevalence of malnutrition risk. Also, by the previous Optimal Nutritional Care for All (ONCA) activities in Turkey, nutritional screening became mandatory and it has been incorporated into the hospital quality standards of MoH. By implementing this project, it is possible to insert accreditation standards of CNTs into the hospital quality standards of MoH.
- **Objectives and scope:** After establishing a national accreditation organization of CNTs, on-site visits to voluntary hospitals will be conducted for auditing according to the pre-determined 'accreditation standards of the CNT'.

Planned activities & deliverables

- **Outline the steps to be taken**
 - Establish a national accreditation organization of CNTs initiated by Turkish PEN Society (KEPAN)
 - Develop accreditation standards of the CNT and declare it on website and through mailing to members.
 - Assess the applications of voluntary hospitals and initiate on-site audits.
 - Announce the qualified hospitals in a ceremony every year during the Nutrition Day and hand their certificates.
- **What are the concrete deliverables of the project?** Implementation of CNTs accreditation will:
 - Motivate the hospitals to competitively receive the accreditation certificate.
 - Activate organization of a strong multidisciplinary CNT convert «from theory to practice».
 - Improve patient outcomes.
 - Increase awareness and knowledge on health economics (HE) and integrate HE related topics into trainings.
- **What achievements are possible in the next 12 and 24 months?**
 - 0-6 months: Establish the national accreditation organization, finalize the standards and declare them.
 - 6-12 months: Accept the applications from hospitals for accreditation.
 - 12-24 month: Assess the application documents and provide on-site visits and announce the qualified hospitals.

Resources & enablers

- **Describe personnel, financial needs:** Accreditation organization members will consist of experienced and voluntary 5 physicians, 2 dietitians, 1 nurse and 1 pharmacist. Each on-site visit will be provided by 3 members. Government hospitals have no budget for these travel expenses. In order to coordinate education, travel expenses and meetings of the organization, financial support requested is 30 000 euros.
- **Specify how the grant will be spent:** The 2 000 Euros will be allocated for the organization of the accreditation committee and their meetings to develop the standards. An additional 2 000 Euros will be used for the online education program of CNTs to improve awareness and knowledge on malnutrition treatment and its positive outcomes on health economics. Travel expenses for on-site accreditation visits to approximately 50 hospitals, their pre- and post-meetings will be 25 000 Euros. The remaining 1 000 Euros will cover the «certificate ceremony» that will be held on Nutrition Day.
- **What factors will make it successful?:** The success will be achieved with the provision of practice of inactive CNTs, quality improvement in already active CNTs and receiving support and involvement of MoH in accreditation.

Results/outcomes & expected impact

- **How will the findings be implemented?** Higher standards will be set for quality improvement in the practice of CNTs, activating the dormant CNTs, ultimate findings will be shared with MoH to get their support in national adoption of the accreditation program.
- **How will this project advance patient care / contribute to optimal nutritional care?** This project will be beneficial in motivating and competitively activating CNTs to promote quality improvement of their practices. Therefore, more patients will effectively be screened and followed by CNTs which will result in better outcomes and reduction in prevalence of malnutrition risk.
- **What makes the project innovative?** Accreditation of a CNT has not been previously documented. With this project, at least some of the CNTs that was just declared to the MoH as a document but was not in clinical practice will become active also supported by their hospital administrations.
- **Will the project be likely to influence national nutrition policy?** Quality Assurance Department of MoH is interested in positive outcomes, therefore will be willing to be involved in this project. Positive outcomes of this pilot accreditation program is expected to be extended by inclusion in the nutritional policy of MoH.
- **Is the project transferable to other settings / countries?** Accreditation of CNTs will be a good model for other countries and the standards will be shared in KEPAN website to be adapted and used by different countries.