

The Cachexia Assessment Scale: Development and Psychometric Properties

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose/Objectives: To develop a tool to identify patients with cancer who suffer from cachexia throughout all stages of the disease.

Design: Tool development study.

Setting: Oncology day care, follow-up clinics, radiotherapy, and hospice home care.

Sample: 90 patients with cancer (25 men and 65 women).

Methods: The Cachexia Assessment Scale (CAS) was created based on a thorough review of the literature and was tested for its psychometric properties.

Main Research Variables: Presence of cachexia

Findings: Measures of reliability were determined by inter-rater, test-retest, and internal consistency reliability. Measures of validity were content validity, criterion validity, sensitivity, and specificity.

Conclusion: The CAS possesses adequate levels of reliability and validity and can be used to evaluate cachexia at all stages of cancer.

Strengths:

Palliative care population

Development of the tool that could potentially be very helpful in palliative care

Weaknesses:

The sample size of this study was small and limited to a few treatment centers with a limited number of types of cancer. The number of the patients included in the study were not enough to allow for a comparison of different types of therapy.

Relevance to Palliative Care:

Cachexia is a very common condition in palliative care population. Development of a sensitive tool would be very helpful in cachexia management. Incorporating such a tool in discussion about our management would give our patients and their families much needed reassurance and more realistic expectations.