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ASSESSMENT OF NUTRITIONAL STATUS USING THE MUAC Z-SCORE TAPE IN PEDIATRIC PATIENTS HOSPITALIZED IN A GENERAL HOSPITAL IN TUXTLA GUTIÉRREZ, CHIAPAS

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In Latin America and the Caribbean, around 22.5% of the population lacks access to a healthy diet. In 2020, 131.2 million people in this region could not afford an adequate diet, representing an increase of 8 million compared to 2019, exacerbating malnutrition, a highly prevalent problem in Mexico and one that, given the hospital context and socioeconomic landscape of Chiapas, can have an impact on patient recovery, length of stay, and morbidity and mortality. The objective of this study was to evaluate the nutritional status of hospitalized pediatric patients using the MUAC Z-SCORE tape to improve the quality and accuracy of nutritional assessment through a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional, comparative, and documentary study, including a probabilistic sample of 50 patients aged 2 months to 18 years. The MUAC Z-SCORE, nursing records, and the WHO Anthro, Microsoft Excel, and Jamovi software were used for data collection. In this study, 52% of patients had adequate nutritional status, while 40% showed some degree of malnutrition and 8% showed overnutrition. Likewise, the tape detected a higher prevalence of malnutrition (40%) compared to BMI (18%). Both variables showed a moderate and positive correlation ($r = 0.494$, $p = 0.001$). In contrast, BMI identified a higher prevalence of obesity (22%) compared to the 8% detected by the tape; However, when comparing the tape measure results with height for age, a non-significant correlation was found ($r = 0.064$, $p = 0.659$), so we can infer that height does not influence the tape measure diagnosis, as it does in the diagnosis obtained using BMI. In conclusion, the tape proved to be an effective tool for assessing nutritional status, specifically malnutrition, as well as an adequate nutritional analysis in patients with short stature, which are relevant aspects, especially in hospital settings with a high prevalence of malnutrition.