

INTRODUCTION TO THE CRITICAL CARE PROGRAMME NUTRITION SUPPORT ALGORITHMS AND REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

In April 2010, the Clinical Lead of the Critical Care Programme (CCP) asked the Dietitian Therapy Profession Representative to develop nutrition support guidelines and algorithms which could be used nationally to guide practice in Irish intensive care units (ICUs). A succinct supporting reference document was also requested to outline the evidence base for these guidelines. See figure 1 for process used for guideline development.

A subgroup of DATHS ICU dietitians worked together to produce an advanced draft. This subgroup included Carmel O’Hanlon (Beaumont Hospital), Niamh Smyth (Tallaght Memorial Hospital), Nicola Dervan (St. Vincent’s University Hospital) and Lisa Shanahan (Mater Misericordiae Hospital). Feedback was then requested from other ICU dietitians nationally on advanced drafts through the Nutrition Support Interest Group (NSIG) of the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI). Input was also sought from the multi-professions. Initial final drafts were submitted to the Clinical Lead by the beginning of September 2010. Further updates were made, with final documents amended in 2012 based on feedback and updates in the evidence base.

The documents have been approved by all the relevant bodies, and are now available for use by ICU staff nationwide to support the development of local guidelines and protocols, and to guide practice.

Figure 1: Process used for CCP nutrition support guideline development



It is because of quality improvement initiatives like this, that Irish intensive care units are considered among the world leaders in nutritional care of their patients, as evidenced by the International Nutrition Survey 2011 awards for the top 10 performing ICUs regarding nutritional care. This survey is co-ordinated by the Clinical Evaluation Research Unit at Kingston General Hospital in Ontario, Canada. The 2011 survey looked at nutritional practices and outcomes in 183 intensive care units in 27 countries worldwide.

Beaumont Hospital's two intensive care units (see figures 2 and 3) received outstanding achievement awards, achieving 4th and 9th places in the 2011 survey. Ireland was the only European country to have ICUs in the top 10 ranking in the 2011 survey. Cork University Hospital's ICU also achieved a top ten ranking in the 2008 survey. Such achievements are only possible because of dedicated care and a multidisciplinary approach to nutrition support, with significant dietetic involvement.

Figure 2: Beaumont Hospital's General Intensive Care Unit's MDT



Figure 3: Beaumont Hospital's Richmond Intensive Care Unit's MDT

