Weight Change Trajectory in Patients With Locally Advanced Nasopharyngeal Carcinoma During the Peri–Radiation Therapy Period

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OBJECTIVES: To analyze the weight change trajectory in patients with locally advanced nasopharyngeal carcinoma (LANPC) before, during, and after radiation therapy for a time span of 40 weeks.

SAMPLE & SETTING: 147 patients from a university-affiliated medical center in China were included.

METHODS & VARIABLES: Body weight was measured weekly during intensive treatment and biweekly after radiation therapy.

RESULTS: All 147 patients experienced critical weight loss during the peri–radiation therapy period. Overall, body weight remained basically unchanged during induction chemotherapy, followed by a sharp and severe decrease during radiation therapy. At 20 weeks after radiation therapy, body weight had increased only slightly from the lowest point.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING: A time-tailored intervention based on the weight change trajectory is necessary for patients with LANPC. According to the weight change trajectory, relevant interventions for maintaining body weight should be initiated as early as the second week of radiation therapy and no later than the fourth week of radiation therapy, and these interventions should continue for at least four weeks after radiation therapy.

KEYWORDS nasopharyngeal carcinoma; body weight; radiation therapy; induction chemotherapy

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