

## **ABSTRACT**

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Weight loss and other nutritional problems are common in cancer patients. The problems are of importance for response to treatment and survival and the well-being of the patients. Nutritional support can be carried out in different ways. The efforts considered in this thesis are; assessment of nutritional status to find the patients who are at risk to become or already are malnourished, assessment of dietary intake, dietary advice, information and support to the families, information and education to the caregivers, and supplementation with drugs that possibly could influence the weight development. The Swedish version of the Patient Generated Subjective Global assessment of nutritional status, PG-SGA, is useful in assessment of nutritional status in cancer patients. Dietary advice and support to patients and their families combined with information and education to the staff, at the hospital and in the home care, turned out to have a positive influence at the weight development and other parameters related to nutrition. The effects were seen in consecutive patients with small cell lung cancer in comparison with a historical control group, and in patients in a randomised trial. Fish oil and melatonin could stabilise weight development in patients with advanced gastrointestinal cancer, but had no marked influence on factors reflecting cachexia. Problems with nutrition in cancer patients are possible to recognise and various interventions may be beneficial.

*Key words:* Cancer, weight loss, PG-SGA, dietary advice, education, fish oil, melatonin.

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