

# Food Intake in Internal Medicine Departments: The Gap Between Documentation and Reality

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## Background

- Malnutrition is common but often underdiagnosed in hospitalized patients.
- It impairs recovery and worsens clinical outcomes.
- Visual estimation by nursing staff is commonly used to document food intake in hospitals.
- These estimates can be inaccurate, delaying appropriate nutritional care.

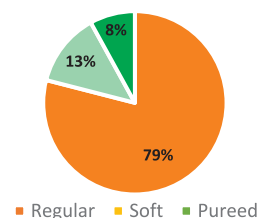
**Aim:** To assess the accuracy of routine documentation by comparing nursing estimates with actual plate waste measurements.

## Results

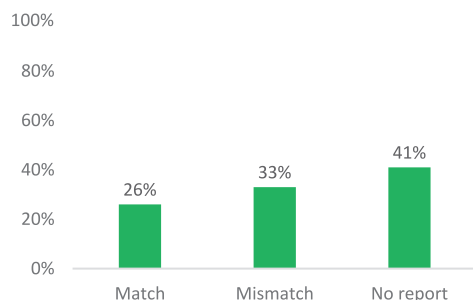
Result 1: Mean energy served and consumed by food categories (N=300)

	Total (%)	Carbohydrate (%)	Protein (%)	Vegetable (%)
Meal Served (Kcal)	738 (100)	373 (100)	295 (100)	70 (100)
Consumed (Kcal)	386 (52.3)	199 (53.3)	169 (57.2)	41 (58.7)

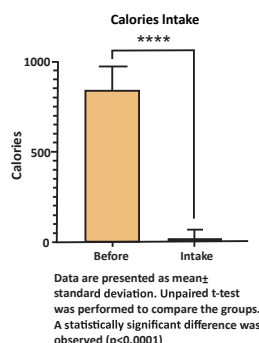
Result 2: Food intake by texture-modified diet (N=300)



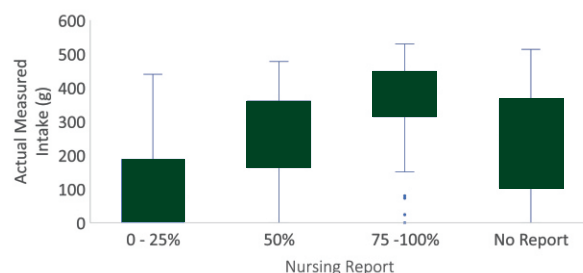
Result 3: Accuracy of nursing report compared to actual intake (N=300)



Result 4: Calories intake in pureed texture diet (N=24)



Result 5: The distribution and pattern of the gaps between the nursing report and actual consumption (g)



## Methods

- Conducted in internal medicine departments at Rabin Medical Center, Beilinson Hospital, Israel.
- The study (N=300) compared nursing estimations to actual food intake based on weighing food components before and after meals.
- Data were analyzed using Cohen's Kappa and Bland-Altman.
- Ethics approval was obtained

## Summary/ Highlights

- Significant discrepancies were found between nursing estimations and actual intake measured by precise weighing.
- Despite documentation suggesting adequate intake, true consumption was often lower, especially in pureed meals ( $p < 0.0001$ ).
- Visual estimations proved unreliable, underscoring the need for more accurate and standardized methods to assess hospitalized patients' food intake.

## References

- Rinninella E et al. Hospital Services to Improve Nutritional Intake and Reduce Food Waste: A Systematic Review. *Nutrients*. 2023;15:1686.
- Cederholm T, Bosaeus I. Malnutrition in Adults. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2024; 391(2):155–65.

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