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HISTORY ARTICLE

Clinical Nutrition Service at the *Hospital General de México Dr. Eduardo Liceaga*

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Throughout human history, medicine has undergone significant advances, especially in the past five decades. Among the recently developed disciplines is Clinical Nutrition (CN). It deals with the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of nutritional and metabolic changes related to acute or chronic diseases and conditions caused by excess or deficit of energy. It is important to emphasize that NC not only has a curative approach but also a preventive one[1].

History of the formation of the CN service

The *Hospital General de México Dr. Eduardo Liceaga* (HGM) was inaugurated on February 5, 1905, by President Porfirio Díaz, with the presence of Dr. Liceaga and its first director, Dr. Fernando López. Since then, food was provided to patients during their hospital stay, with the aim of satisfying "hunger," since the hospital was conceived as the "hospital of the poor[2]."

In 1943, the first courses for the training of dietitians began in Mexico, which addressed both the clinical and social aspects of food, promoting the emergence of formal education in Nutrition. In 1950, the hospital´s Nutrition Service was established. Initially, it was in charge of cooks, laborers, and treasurers, who focused on the operational preparation of food for hospitalized patients[3]. Over the decades, dietitians, nutrition technicians, and nutrition graduates joined the service after the creation of the first bachelor's degrees in this area in the country, graduating from various public and private institutions.

In 2000, some of the staff who were in the food service took the initiative to form a nutrition service focused on the clinic and outpatient consultation with a dieto-therapeutic approach. The concern then arose to separate the functions, location, and structure of the food service area or central kitchen to create a new CN service. However, it was not until 2013 that this division was carried out thanks to the dietitians headed by Alejandra Ruíz Barranco, RD in Nutrition, and with the support of the General Director, chaired at that time by Dr. Francisco P. Navarro Reynoso and Dr. Jesús Miguel Chávez Mayol, Director of Diagnostic and Treatment Support who was in charge of the development of the new CN service, at that time, was temporarily located in the basement of unit 204 of the HMG.

At the same time, in 2001, Dr. Vanessa Fuchs Tarlovsky began a series of research projects focused on the nutritional assessment and treatment of cancer patients, being a pioneer in this area in Mexico. Subsequently, in 2005, at the request of Dr. Eduardo Arana Rivera and Dr. Raquel Gerson Cwillich, a service focused on the nutritional care of hospitalized patients at the oncology service who required enteral or parenteral nutritional support was initiated.

In 2013, the areas that had emerged in parallel were merged, and Dr. Vanessa Fuchs Tarlovsky MD, PhD, RD and specialized in Clinical Nutrition, was appointed head of the first oficial Clinical Nutrition Service, who continues to date in office and who is algo an internationally known researcher in clinical nutrition and has contributed with many impoirtant papers regarding

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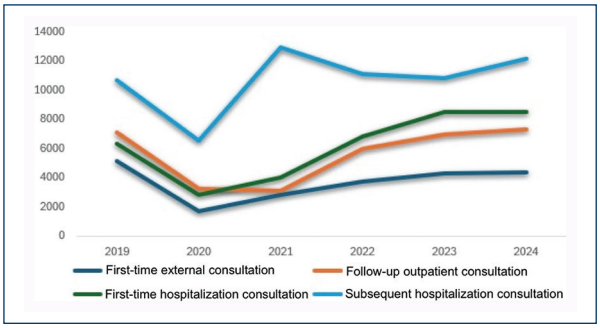


Figure 1. Type of hospital consultation from 2019 to 2024. *2024: period from January to November.

practice of clinical nutrition. In that year, the workforce was made up of six graduates in nutrition and four technical dietitians. In 2018, with the support of Dr. César Ahité Gutiérrez, general director in turn, the coordination of the unit was changed to the Medical Direction, even if it algo contribute to the surgical and pediatrics areas, and the unification of the CN service was promoted through the physical relocation of the newly formed service at the Unit 308 which is where it is located today. At present, the service has eight offices, a management area, a research coordination, and a space for academic sessions for patients, assigned staff, and students.

In the past 10 years (2013-2023), the CN service has potentially grown by 383% compared to its beginning s (Fig. 1). Professionals with specialty, master's, and doctoral degrees in nutritional sciences have been incorporated, to high quality care to the population.

During this period, a total of 191,948 consultations were provided, of which 42.4% were outpatient consultations, providing nutritional guidance to patients with highly prevalent conditions in the country, such as malnutrition, obesity, dyslipidemia, and diabetes. 57.5% of consultations were provided to patients during their hospital stay, mainly those with malnutrition or who required nutritional support.

Comparing with year 2020, when hospital occupancy was mainly of patients affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the current year (2024), in which all clinical areas are operating normally, an increase of 55.8% has been observed both inpatient and outpatient nutritional.

Due to the increase in interconsultations in the hospitalization area, the demand for supplies to nourish the population of patients with special requirements has increased, including standard and specialized polymeric enteral formulas in addition to having a pharmacy center within the hospital to guarantee the prescription of parenteral nutrition with individualized calculations. Placing the hospital as one of the most complete public hospitals in the entire country to guarantee nutritional support.

At present, the service is made up of 28 workers: a head of service, a research coordinator, two administrative staff, 22 nutritionists, as well as two nutrition technitians. Of the nutrition staff, 65.2% work in the morning shift, providing care to the 1130 hospitalization beds in the areas of adult care and outpatient consultation. 13.6% are dedicated to the care of hospitalized pediatric patients, including the recent Child Welfare Clinic. 18% focus exclusively on adult outpatient consultation in Unit 308 during the evening shift and on weekends, while 4.5% of the staff attends in the Obesity and Diabetes Clinic for adults.

The CN service is distinguished not only for its patient care but also as a benchmark in the training of generations of students of the Bachelor's Degree in Nutrition, postgraduate programs in specialties and master's degrees in CN and health sciences from various national and international institutions, as well as medical doctors who study their high specialty in CN. This fact has also led to an annual number of publications in indexed journals at the national and international level, allowing the CN service to expand its presence in other countries by publicizing its current practices through scientific publications and its participation in national and international conferences.

CN is a human right linked to the right to health and food that it is imperative to promote in the clinical setting to guarantee access to nutritional care for hospitalized patients, regardless of their stage of life[4]. Because of all the work that has been done and the success that the CN servicie has develop since it's creation, we thank all the staff who work and have worked in the NC service, and especially the patients, who have allowed us to grow as professionals in our work of nurturing.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Ethical considerations

Protection of human subjects and animals. The authors declare that the procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation and with the World Medical Association and the Declaration of Helsinki. The procedures were authorized by the Institutional Ethics Committee.

Confidentiality, informed consent, and ethical approval. This study does not involve personal patient data, medical records, or biological samples and does not require ethical approval. SAGER guidelines do not apply.

Declaration on the use of artificial intelligence. The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence was used in the writing or creation of the content of this manuscript.

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