Editorial

Over 65s make up an ever-increasing percentage of the population, especially in Western countries. In the United States, for example, the population group living 85 years or longer is the fastest rising. Acute, hp15% of community-dwelling older people were malnourished. Exton Smith and colleagues estimated a 4% malnutrition rate in the older population of the United Kingdom in 1977. e primary causes are described in their diagram in Figure 8.5, which can also be memorised using the mnemonic MEALS-ON-WHEELS. Erdington discovered a 10% prevalence rate of malnutrition among patients living at home and su ering from cancer or chronic disease in a large general practise database in the South of England, based on BMI and anthropometric measures. McWhirter and Pennington discovered that not only were 40% of older patients malnourished when they arrived at the hospital, but that this remained largely unnoticed, with just 5% of the undernourished receiving dietary assistance. During their hospital stay, these people gained weight, whilst the majority of people lost weight [1,2].

e elderly have distinct characteristics. Body Mass Index (BMI) and standardised mortality have a link. Overweight is the greatest risk early in life. e emphasis switches decade by decade, with individuals with a low BMI having the highest mortality among the elderly. ere was a clear link between mortality and anthropometrically measured nutritional status in our rst broken femur investigation. We con rmed this een years later, demonstrating that MAC was the best predictor of prognosis. e probabilities of dying rose by a factor of 0.89 for each cm drop in MAC, p=0.0087. Age, dementia, and TSF were all found to be signi cant predictors of mortality following a femur fracture. A number of studies have also found an inverse association between nutritional status on the one hand and the rate of complications, the length of convalescence, and the length of stay on the other. Nutritional intervention, on the other hand, has been found to result in faster

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