

Muscular strength: an indicator of nutritional status Fuerza muscular: un indicador de estado nutritivo.

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A hand dynamometer was used to measure muscle strength in 207 patients admitted to the Gastroenterology service of a general hospital. Validation of international standards in a normal population of both sexes and different ages revealed that our normals perform at the 25% percentile of international values. Results were correlated with other measurements of nutritional status, namely anthropometric measurements, serum albumin level and tuberculin test. Compared to normals, muscle strength was significantly ($p < 0.01$) lower in patients with body mass index under 19, cutaneous tricipital folding $< 85\%$, brachial circumference $< 85\%$, and serum albumin < 3.5 g/dl. No difference in muscle strength between tuberculin positive or negative subjects was observed. None of the nutritional parameter was helpful to predict complications in patients submitted to surgery. Thus, muscle strength is a useful parameter to evaluate nutritional status but, similar to other measurements, is not predictive o