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Summary

Nutritional support in metastatic disease: Fasting mimicking diets/keto and beyond

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Small Intestine & Nutrition | Digestive Oncology

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The speaker reviewed evidence on fasting and ketogenic diets in cancer patients, concluding that despite promising preclinical animal data, there is insufficient clinical evidence in humans to support dietary restriction approaches, and current guidelines recommend against energy restriction in malnourished or at-risk cancer patients.

KEY POINTS

- Aspen guidelines contain a strong recommendation not to use dietary provisions that restrict energy intake in patients who are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition
- Animal studies showed fasting may reduce cancer cells, protect normal cells, and enhance chemotherapy efficacy, but nearly all human clinical trials listed on clinicaltrials.gov were never completed or published
- One non-randomized Italian study of 14 advanced triple negative breast cancer patients on fasting mimicking diet versus 76 historical controls showed better overall survival in the fasting group, but progression-free survival was not significant
- Clinical evidence for ketogenic diets across multiple tumor types shows no proven survival benefits and insufficient evidence, with dropout rates between 13 and 84 percent due to side effects including fatigue, headaches, brain fog, and dizziness
- Forty percent of cancer patients are undernourished on a given day, and weight loss in cancer patients is defined as cachexia by definition
- The speaker stated that future approaches should include individualized nutritional therapy based on body composition, adequate protein-energy intake, exercise, cachexia management, and integration with cancer treatment rather than dietary restriction

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