

Undernutrition and how to record it for care planning actions within an interRAI assessment

Older adults have an increased risk of mortality associated with a low BMI (equal or less than 23).¹

Undernutrition often goes unrecognised as height and weight of older adults are not routinely measured at the time of a clinical assessment.

A little over 20% of completed interRAI assessments, for the year 2017- 2018, did not record the information required to calculate the person's BMI.²

In the interRAI assessments (HC and LTCF) the fields K1a and b can be completed to produce the BMI outcome measure. The calculated BMI can trigger the Undernutrition CAP.

Only leave these fields blank if:

- (a) the GP practice / facility does not have safe weighing scales
- (b) the person is unable to safely step onto scales in the home
- (c) the person has end stage disease

If a person is unsteady on their feet recording height and weight of home and community people is NOT mandatory:

- When assessment shows that the person is unsteady on their feet their weight will not be recorded unless provided by GP;
- Proviso: assessors will focus on unintended weight loss questions for these people;
- Monitoring: report on the number of assessments with “% change” not recorded.

If measuring a person's height is difficult for the assessor, there is a conversion tool that can be used. It requires measurement of the ulnar length of the person. A description of this conversion chart can be found here:

- www.bapen.org.uk
- Chart to convert ulnar length to a person's height:
www.bapen.org.uk/pdfs/must/must_page6.pdf
- Online and phone app: www.bapen.org.uk/screening-and-must/must-calculator

¹ BMJ Am J Clin Nutr-2014-Winter-ajan.113.068122: BMI and all-cause mortality in older adults: a meta-analysis1–3

² www.interrai.co.nz/assets/Documents/ESS-Information-for-Managers/interRAI-Governance-Board-Agreements-for-use-of-the-interRAI-assessment.pdf, item 1.9,page 4