OBJECTIVES

1. To elicit and compare preferences for the characteristics of HEN products among patients and physicians, using a discrete choice experiment (DCE)\(^8\).

2. To assess the representativeness of the caregivers’ perception when answering on behalf of the patient in their care.

METHODS

A literature review and two focal groups including physicians (n=5) and patients and caregivers (n=4; Figure 1) led to the selection of 6 main HEN attributes for the DCE, with 2 levels each (Table 1), as well as 8 characteristics to be evaluated in an ad hoc questionnaire.

Table 1. Attributes and levels included in the DCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute (alternative reference)</th>
<th>Patients (95% CI)</th>
<th>Physicians (95% CI)</th>
<th>Physicians-Patients (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tolerability (easy/difficult)</td>
<td>2.09 (1.67-2.51)</td>
<td>3.32 (2.60-4.04)</td>
<td>1.23 (0.47-1.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability (adopto adapt)</td>
<td>2.10 (1.62-2.57)</td>
<td>2.11 (1.41-2.81)</td>
<td>0.01 (-0.73-0.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrients and calories (contribute/do not contribute)</td>
<td>1.64 (1.39-1.89)</td>
<td>2.42 (2.0-2.94)</td>
<td>0.78 (0.21-1.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling (easy/difficult)</td>
<td>0.53 (0.31-0.74)</td>
<td>1.18 (0.80-1.56)</td>
<td>0.85 (0.57-1.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections (easy/difficult)</td>
<td>0.05 (-0.25-0.35)</td>
<td>0.93 (0.53-1.33)</td>
<td>0.88 (-0.13-2.78)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information (include/one included): NA

RESULTS

1. A DCE with 8 choice scenarios\(^9\) (supportCEs\(^9\), R\(^7\)) including the attributes and levels identified, was included in the survey along with sociodemographic, professional and clinical variables.

2. An ad hoc questionnaire was designed to elicit patients concerns about HEN characteristics (5-points Likert scale; 1=not at all important and 5=very important).

3. Partial utilities were obtained through a conditional logit model (survival\(^8\), R\(^7\)) and used to estimate the Relative Importance (RI) of the attributes.

4. A multinomial logit model (mlogit\(^10\) for R\(^7\)) was applied to identify possible explanatory variables in the DCE while Cohen’s kappa (κ) and weighted kappa (κ\(_w\)) assessed the agreement between patients and their caregivers.

CONCLUSION

1. Overall, patients and physicians have a similar perception on the relevance of different HEN characteristics. However, significant differences can be found.

2. Caregivers showed a moderate concordance with patients’ preferences in the DCE, and even a good concordance in the additional questions, indicating that they can put themselves in the position of patients when providing medical care.

3. Although there was an overall agreement, differences suggest that patients’ preferences should be considered when prescribing a HEN product and, when necessary, their caregivers can provide a reliable approach to their needs.

REFERENCES