Protein malnutrition is not only the lack of nutrition or a deficiency, but can also be an excess of a person’s intake of nutrients. When this takes place, it changes the way a body functions (Marshall, 2016). Malnutrition affects all types of people. People with lack of knowledge and access to healthy foods, people that live a sedentary lifestyle, and multiple economic disadvantages are all common reasons people develop malnutrition (Cleveland Clinic, 2022).

The role that genetics plays on this disease is monitored through pregnancy and the nutrient intake by a mother at the time of conception. It is also evident and monitored postnatally in infants after they are born, because they have been found to have the maternal metastable epialleles that they receive via breastmilk (Duggal & William, 2018).

This resident that has a diagnosis of protein malnutrition is presenting with edema in the extremities and abdomen strictly due to the lack of protein. The physiologic response to the stimulus is that it causes fluid to shift to areas of the body such as the arms, legs, and abdomen and it retains in the tissues (Harvard Health Publishing, 2022). I believe this response occurred for a few reasons. Malnutrition in older adults can be caused by decreased intake, which in this scenario, is due to the lack of ability to chew and swallow from the residents’ dentures. The resident also has a history of malabsorption syndrome which puts them at an increased risk of malabsorption. And lastly, the elderly population tends to have a reduction in appetite and a reduction of nutrient absorption (Cleveland Clinic, 2022).

When it comes to gender and the risks of malnutrition, there isn’t real evidence to prove why women are more susceptible to being malnourished than men. It is a known complex issue that is poorly understood (Castel et al., 2006). I believe it’s due to certain risk factors that women have more than men such as eating disorders like anorexia, and bulimia. Women also are at a higher risk of being malnourished during pregnancy and breastfeeding as their body tries to keep up with the needs of the fetus and baby.

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