CORRESPONDENCE

The Involuntary Weight Loss of the Elderly

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Rheumatic Disorders

I read the detailed article by Löser et al. with great interest. With regard to the topic of involuntary weight loss in elderly people, a necessary addition from the perspective of rheumatology and internal medicine is that – in addition to the disorders discussed in the article – chronic inflammatory rheumatic disorders also often constitute a cause of involuntary weight loss and require investigation and adequate treatment (if diagnosed) in patients with weight loss problems.

The main entity is the group of vasculitides of the medium or large blood vessels, especially giant cell arteritis/polymyalgia rheumatica. In the latter, weight loss and age >65 years are among the classification criteria, and with an incidence of about 20/100 000 population >50 years of age and a prevalence of about 200/100 000 population this constitutes an often unrecognized internal medical problem in elderly people, not only in specialist university or acute hospitals for rheumatology. DOI: 10.3238/arztebl.2008.0309

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