

Clear liquid diet vs soft diet as the initial meal in patients with mild acute pancreatitis: a randomized interventional trial

Abstract

Background: Patients recovering from mild acute pancreatitis are usually started on a liquid diet and advanced to a solid diet. Evidence suggests a soft diet as the initial meal is tolerated well by such patients. However, the results are controversial.

Objectives: To assess the safety of starting an early soft diet compared with a liquid diet in patients with mild acute pancreatitis as the initial meal.

Methods: We randomized 60 patients with mild acute pancreatitis into 2 groups to receive either a clear liquid diet (CLD) or a soft diet (SD) as the initial meal, and parameters such as tolerance to diet, recurrence of pain, length of hospitalization (LOH), need to stop feeding, post-refeeding length of hospitalization (PRLOH), and postdischarge readmission rate within 30 days were analyzed.

Results: The demographic and baseline parameters (amylase, total leucocyte count, Balthazar score) in the 2 groups were comparable. Patients in both groups tolerated the diet well except 1 patient in the SD group, who developed vomiting and diarrhea, not severe enough to stop feeding. LOH and PRLOH were significantly lower in the SD group (4.23 ± 2.08 and 1.96 ± 1.63 days, $P < .0001$) compared with the CLD group (6.91 ± 2.43 and 4.10 ± 1.64 days, $P < .0001$). PRLOH in the SD group was 2.14 days less when compared with the CLD group.

Conclusion: In patients with mild acute pancreatitis, a soft diet as the initial meal is well tolerated and leads to a shorter total length of hospitalization.