

**Question for oral answer O-000064/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 115

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Subject: Burden of malnutrition in Europe

Malnutrition is a serious public health problem in Europe which is costing EU governments EUR 120 billion every year.

Malnutrition is caused by a variety of factors, including lack of access to healthy foods, loss of appetite, metabolic conditions, or an inability to eat due to illness or surgery. It can delay recovery and prolong hospitalisation, leading to increased susceptibility to infection and reduced independence and quality of life.

Large-scale studies compiled in the 2009 Medical Nutrition Industry report on 'Tackling Malnutrition' show that one in four patients admitted to hospital are at risk of malnutrition or are already malnourished, and up to 90% of residents in long-term care in the community are also at risk of malnutrition. With Europe's rapidly ageing population, the social and economic costs of malnutrition will rise steadily over the coming years unless concrete measures are taken to raise awareness and to address this serious problem.

Improving dietary habits, developing comprehensive nutrition guidelines for healthcare professionals and promoting patients' access to nutritional therapies would be cost-effective means of addressing the burden of malnutrition.

- Given the extent of the problem and its under-acknowledgment, will the Commission engage in a pan-European awareness-raising campaign on the burden of malnutrition in Europe?
- What is the Commission planning to do – in terms of proposing recommendations or legislation – in order to assist Member States to integrate nutrition and nutritional care in their public health and disease management strategies?
- Will the Commission address the burden of malnutrition in the elderly as part of its action plan on active ageing to be proposed in 2011?

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