

In determining how to accurately assess an individual's nutritional status, clinicians need to understand the difference between clinical conditions that affect the phenomenon of body (fat and muscle) wasting. The conditions: malnutrition, cachexia, sarcopenia and frailty look phenotypically alike but the cause and treatment of each differs. Wasting caused by malnutrition responds to feeding but cachexia, sarcopenia and frailty do not necessarily respond to adequate nutrition therapy unless supported by other modalities such as exercise (sarcopenia) and specific treatment of disease (e.g. infliximab for Crohn's disease). This brief opinion paper authored by Dr. Khursheed Jeejeebhoy explains the difference between the phenotypes and will assist busy clinicians in understanding how to recognize the various causes of wasting and thus help to establish appropriate nutrition and other therapeutic care plans. To obtain the paper, go to: DOI:10.1097/MCO.0b013e328352694f

December 2016