

Improving preventive screening for sarcopenia

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ABSTRACT

Sarcopenia is characterized by progressive and generalized loss of skeletal muscle mass and strength with a risk of adverse outcomes. Next to the intrinsic, age-related processes, a multitude of extrinsic and behavioural factors can aggravate the development and/or progression of sarcopenia; such as disuse and lack of physical activity, malnutrition, chronic inflammation and (co-)morbidity. As such, sarcopenia can be thought of as both a process and an outcome. Sarcopenia as “a condition” is a major cause of frailty and disability in older people, but as “an

active process” it is present in every person reaching adult life. Given the intrinsic, age-related character of sarcopenia, primary prevention should start as early as the onset of the underlying process (i.e. at a young adult age); at higher ages, secondary and tertiary preventive strategies can be considered in order to avoid excessive progression of sarcopenia.