



The Assessment of Body Composition in Health and Disease

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ABSTRACT Body composition (BC) is the best long-term indicator of nutritional status and it is of interest to physicians and researchers because of its association with health status. The assessment of BC involves the use of multicompartiment models that are not readily available in clinical practice and epidemiological research. Indirect methods, i.e. methods making use of predictive algorithms, are often used in these settings. However, while the use of BC algorithms may be accurate at the population level, it rarely is at the individual level. Albeit not yet a gold-standard technique, dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry holds significant promise for the assessment BC in clinical practice and epidemiological studies. Anthropometry is the single most universally applicable and inexpensive BC method and is of great importance because of its association with health status. Bioelectrical impedance analysis is an indirect BC technique that may be of interest for the study of body water distribution between extra- and intra-cellular spaces.

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