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Association of Malnutrition and Quality of Life of Hemodialysis Patients

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Objectives: This cross-sectional correlational study determined the prevalence of malnutrition and assessed the quality of life (QOL) of patients on hemodialysis (HD). It also examined the influence of nutritional status on QOL.

Methods: Eighty subjects answered the Kidney Disease Quality of Life Short Form (KDQOL-SFTM 1.3). Nutritional status was assessed using Subjective Global Assessment (SGA). Multinomial logistic regression was used to predict association of nutritional status and QOL while adjusting for age, education, employment and number of years on HD.

Results: The subjects consisted of 45 women and 35 men, with mean age of 55 years. Majority were married (75%) and unemployed (61%). Consistent with worldwide data, majority had underlying diabetic kidney disease (32, 40%).

Thirty four had signs of mild to moderate malnutrition (42.5%) and 8 were classified as severely malnourished (10%).

Based on multinomial logistic regression, there is significant association between nutritional status and all parameters of quality of life (physical and mental composites, and burden and effects of kidney disease). Subjects who were SGA B (mild to moderate malnutrition) were 5.7 times more likely to have abnormal physical QOL, while those with severe malnutrition (SGA C) were 6.8 times more likely to have poor physical QOL. Mental composite QOL was likewise poorer in malnourished patients. Increasing severity of malnutrition was associated with increasing burden of kidney disease (RR 1.2 and 3.1 respectively).

Conclusions: Based on SGA, most patients (52.5%) had mild to moderate malnutrition. There is significant association between nutritional status and all aspects of quality of life. The largest association was noted in the physical composite.

Although HD has greatly increased life expectancy, low quality of life is still reported. Ultimately, the challenge now is not only to prolong life, but more importantly, to provide good quality of life to hemodialysis patients.