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Quality of Life Determinants in Tetraplegic Patients in Morocco: A Cross-Sectional Study

Topic: Disability Studies

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BACKGROUND

Tetraplegia is a form of paralysis resulting from the impairment or loss of motor, sensory, and/or autonomic function due to damage to the cervical spinal cord. This study aimed to assess and identify factors influencing the degree of social integration and quality of life (QoL) for patients with tetraplegia.

METHODS

We conducted a research in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University Hospital Ibn Rochd of Casablanca. This study used the WHOQOL-BREF Arabic version questionnaire. Participants included patients with tetraplegia for at least six months, and the questionnaire was administered with the assistance of a caregiver. Individuals with cognitive impairments were excluded. Data collected included demographic factors and chronic complications. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, and correlation analysis were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS

Twenty-two participants (14 men, 8 women; age range: 15-89 years) completed the WHOQOL-BREF Arabic version questionnaire. The mean scores for the WHOQOL-BREF domains were as follows: physical health (37.45%), psychological health (50.00%), social relations (33.00%), and environment (43.00%). The complications reported were: pain (68%), urinary tract infections (UTIs; 59%), pressure sores (55%), spasticity (50%), respiratory issues (41%), autonomic dysreflexia (36%), and cardiovascular problems (18%). Participants reported facing unemployment (68%), poor financial conditions (64%), and limited access to healthcare (32%).

Correlation analysis revealed strong relationships between psychological health and environment ($r = 0.70$), physical health and psychological health ($r = 0.65$), pressure sores significantly reduced physical QoL ($r = -0.48$), and an easy access to healthcare improves physical quality of life ($r= 0.31$). The Cronbach's alpha of ($\alpha = 0.78$), indicated acceptable internal consistency for the WHOQOL-BREF Arabic version scale.

CONCLUSION

Targeted interventions should consider the interplay between psychological, physical, and environmental factors while addressing chronic complications and socioeconomic barriers

However, due to the small sample size and potential bias in self-reported data, further research with larger samples is needed.

Statement of Disclosures

*Informed consent was obtained from all participants (tetraplegic patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals). Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence.

*For participants with limited mobility, caregivers or legal representatives assisted in the consent process.

*All data were anonymized to protect participant privacy.

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