

The Relationship Between Illness Perception and Health Related Quality of Life in Heart Failure

Hava-Weintraub, Dikla¹; Reicher-Atir, Rivka¹; Yaari, Viki²; Battler, Alexander²; Ben Gal, Tuvia²

¹Rabin Medical Center, Department of Psychology, Petah Tikva, Israel; ²Rabin Medical Center, Cardiology Department, Petah Tikva, Israel

Background: Heart failure (HF) has a profound impact on patients' Health Related Quality Of Life (HR-QOL). Studies have shown that beyond the variables that examine the severity of the disease, there is a correlation between patient's illness perception and his HR-QOL.

Aims: The purpose of the present study was to examine illness perception in patients with HF, by using the Common-Sense Model of Illness Representation, and it's relation to HR-QOL.

Methods: The study group consisted of 78 patients with advanced heart failure regularly attending a dedicated HF clinic in a tertiary hospital. In order to measure illness perception and HR-QOL, subjects were asked to answer the "Minnesota Living with Heart Failure Questionnaire" and then the "Illness Perception Questionnaire-revised". Subjects were also asked to specify their age, sex, marital status, educational level and employment status. Information concerning the severity of their disease was taken from subjects' medical file. Functional capacity, disease duration, comorbidities, latest results of the six minutes' walk test and echocardiographic parameters were recorded.

Results: Stepwise regression analysis showed that three of the illness perception dimensions: emotional representations, consequences and identity, explained 62.5% ($p < .001$) of the variance in the Health Related Quality Of Life parameters.

Conclusions: Our findings suggest that patients' illness perception is related to HR-QOL. Psychological intervention targeting at modifying illness perception, can improve HR-QOL parameters and should be an integral part of every comprehensive therapeutic program of patients with heart failure.