

QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CHILDREN WITH CYSTIC FIBROSIS IN GAZA STRIP

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Cystic Fibrosis "CF" is a chronic, multisystem genetic disease which results in chronic respiratory infections, pancreatic enzyme insufficiency and associated complications in untreated patients. Descriptive, analytical and cross sectional design was used in this study. The study involves 36 children with CF (less than 12 years old) in Gaza. The researchers uses a questionnaire, which included demographic, illness related variables and quality of life domains (physical, emotional, social and school). Reliability coefficient for the questionnaire "Cronbach alpha" was measured and was 0.833. About 61% of the study population was males and 39% were females. Approximately 47% of them were less than 9 years and 53% were more than 9 years. Housing classification was 38.9%, 33.3% and 27.8 % for property house, renting house and family house respectively. Most of their parents had low educational levels and the majority of them was unemployed and has a monthly income less than 1200 NIS. Results also showed that about 61% of them have another sibling with CF. The majority of them receive Creon at a regular basis. This study also showed that the most common associated disease among children was respiratory problem with 43.2%. Also, 38.3% of them had gastrointestinal disease, 14.8% had heart disease and 3.7% had diabetes mellitus. The overall perception of the children regarding QOL was 55% which was considered low. The social functions was the highest (61.6%), physical functions (55.2%), school function (50.6%) and emotional function (48.8%). It is also clear that QOL in males were more than females but this difference was not statistically significant. Results also showed a positive correlation with a highly significant difference between QOL and the four domains and between domains with each other. Social performance was high correlated with school performance ($r = 0.706$) while the lowest correlation was between physical and school performance with no significant ($p\text{-value} = 0.065$). The study recommends the importance of initiating a program to enhance the QOL for children with CF and focusing on the emotional and psychological aspects for those children as it was the least one perceived. Also, there should be coherent and integrated psychosocial programs for children with CF in Gaza strip since this will improve their QOL and will revealed more positive clinical aspects which will in turn improve their health status and will delay the occurrence of complications and life threatening situations.

BIOGRAPHY

Yaser M Hamdouna works in the University of Palestine located in Palestine, his research interests are involved around the public health mainly involving the children and their health.

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