

The impact of demographic characteristics on health-related quality of life profile of Malaysian epilepsy population

Abstract

The possibilities of adverse drug reactions and disease-related psychosocial implications have led to the current emphasis on health-related quality of life (HRQoL) assessment in epilepsy. The main objective of this study was to determine the impact of various demographic characteristics i.e. gender, age, marital status, ethnic origin, religion, and employment status on HRQoL profiles in Malaysian epilepsy patients. Patients with epilepsy were recruited from ten public hospitals in Sabah, Malaysia. Upon written consents, they completed the Malay Quality of Life In Epilepsy-30 (QOLIE-30) instrument which assesses Seizure Worry, Overall QoL, Emotional Well-Being, Energy/Fatigue, Cognitive Functioning, Medication Effects and Social Functioning. An Overall Score was generated to represent a summarised HRQoL score. Univariate and multiple linear regression analyses were both carried out using SPSS 14 for (1) all patients and (2) patients possessing Poor QoL (Overall Score < median) and Good QoL (Overall Score \geq median). One-hundred-and-thirteen patients participated in the study. The respondents ranged from 18-76 years with a mean age of 31 years. Majority were Kadazandusuns (n = 46; 40.7%) and many were unmarried (n = 68; 60.2%), Muslims (n = 50; 44.2%) and unemployed (n = 54; 47.8%). Age was the most significant factor across all patients (B = -0.372, t = -2.238, p = 0.027), regardless of Poor or Good QoL level. Older patients (>56 years) fared the worst in many HRQoL areas. Those with Poor QoL were mostly affected by marital status (widowed/divorced) and ethnic origin (Kadazandusun/Chinese). Religion (Buddhism/Hinduism) emerged as the most prominent HRQoL predictor for patients experiencing Good QoL and being Chinese too played a role. These outcomes indicate that specific demographic characteristics are influential in determining the HRQoL of epilepsy patients. Consequently, healthcare professionals could utilise such information in planning the best treatment and care by considering both the medical and psychosocial impacts towards patients. © 2008 Springer Science+Business Media B.V./The International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS).