Determinants of geriatric patients' quality of life after stroke rehabilitation.

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Abstract

Objectives: Geriatric patients' physical disabilities, dependency on care, and possible psychological ill-being may negatively affect both the patient's quality of life and the informal caregiver burden. Focusing on this interrelationship which can be particularly prominent in geriatric patients with stroke, the objective of this study was to identify determinants of patients' quality of life and informal caregiver burden.

Method: This is a prospective, multicentre, cohort study. Data were collected in 84 geriatric home-dwelling patients with stroke three months after their rehabilitation period in skilled nursing facilities (SNFs). We assessed patients’ quality of life, depressive complaints, neuropsychiatric symptoms, balance, (instrumental) activities of daily living, and informal caregiver burden. Linear regression models were constructed to study the association between the variables.

Results: For several domains, high quality of life of these geriatric patients was associated with high functional independence, less neuropsychiatric symptoms, and less depressive complaints. Informal caregiver burden was not associated with patients’ quality of life, but patients’ neuropsychiatric symptoms were a significant determinant of high informal caregiver burden.

Conclusion: The presence of neuropsychiatric symptoms (more specifically depressive complaints) negatively affects the quality of life of geriatric patients. Their neuropsychiatric symptoms also affect caregiver burden. Health care professionals in SNFs can play an important role in providing the necessary psychosocial support and aftercare.