

ASSESSING HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE IN TAIWANESE PATIENTS WITH MODERATE TO SEVERE CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

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BACKGROUND: Health-related quality of life (QOL) is an important measure of how diseases affect patients' lives. Previous studies had shown a disproportionate reduction in physical aspects of QOL in chronic kidney disease (CKD). As Taiwan has the highest incidence rate of end-stage renal disease in the world, it is important to assess the QOL of Taiwan's CKD patients.

METHOD: QOL was measured by the Medical Outcome Study Short-Form 36 (SF-36) questionnaire (Taiwan version 1.0), a validated instrument for measuring QOL in Taiwan. A total of 213 patients with stage 3 to 5 CKD were enrolled from the nephrology clinic of National Taiwan University Hospital.

RESULTS: CKD patients had significantly lower SF-36 scores than Taiwan's general population ($p < 0.001$ for all 8 scales) and significantly higher SF-36 scores than Taiwan's hemodialysis population ($p < 0.001$ for 7 of 8 individual scales except General Health). Stage 5 CKD patients scored lower than stage 3 and 4 patients in all individual scales ($P < 0.05$ for Physical Function, Mental Health, and General Health). In multivariate analysis, female sex ($p = 0.03$) and older age ($p = 0.01$) were associated with worse Physical Function, while higher serum albumin level ($p = 0.002$) and less degree of renal insufficiency ($p = 0.02$) were associated with better Physical Function. Better Mental Health was predicted by college education ($p = 0.01$).

CONCLUSION: QOL of Taiwanese CKD patients are worse than that of the general population but better than that of the hemodialysis population. Both physical and mental aspects of HR-QOL are significantly impaired in Taiwanese CKD patients. Improving the nutritional status may improve the physical aspects of QOL of Taiwanese CKD patients.

Keyword : chronic kidney disease, quality of life