

Social stigma and its relationship with quality of life in multiple sclerosis patients

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Abstract

Introduction: Multiple sclerosis (MS) is the most prevalent disease of the central nervous system that affects the behavioral characteristics and lifestyle of patients. This study aimed to determine the social stigma and its relationship with quality of life in people with MS referring to the Jahrom MS Association.

Method: This cross-sectional study was conducted on MS patients who are members of the MS Association of Jahrom City in Fars province, southern Iran in 2022. The samples were selected by census method. The number of participants remain 223 people. The data was collected using a standard two-part demographic and Multiple Sclerosis Quality of Life-54 (MSQOL-54) questionnaire and a researcher-made 20-question Social stigma questionnaire which validity and reliability were measured. Data analysis was done in a descriptive way (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation), univariate regression and multivariable linear regression. Data analysis was done using SPSS version 17 and at a significance level of less than 0.05.

Result: Based on univariate regression, marriage [B=0.2, p-value=0.004], physical health [B=0.4, p-value<0.001], emotional well-being [B=0.4, p-value=0.001], cognitive functioning [B=0.4, p-value<0.001], health distress [B=0.5, p-value<0.001] had a positive and significant relationship with patients' quality of life. Duration of disease [B=-0.2, p-value<0.001], physical role limitations [B=-0.4, p-value<0.001], emotional role limitations [B=-0.5, p-value<0.001], pain [B=-0.4, p-value<0.001], energy [B=-0.3, p-value=0.02], health perception [B=-0.3, p-value=0.001], social functioning [B=-0.4, p-value<0.001], sexual function [B=-0.3, p-value<0.001], change in health [B=-0.3, p-value<0.001], sexual function satisfaction [B=-0.3, p-value<0.001] and social stigma [B=-0.3, p-value<0.001] had a negative and significant relationship with patients' quality of life (p<0.05).

Conclusion: The study has emphasized the relationship between the extent and severity of symptoms and disorders with the quality of life of people with MS. The results of the study showed factors such as marriage, physical health and health distress have a positive relationship and factors like duration of disease, physical role limitations, and socialstigma have a negative relationship with the quality of life of people with MS. The quality of life of people with MS is more influenced by mental and psychological factors than the physical limitations of these patients.

Keywords: Multiple sclerosis, Social stigma, Quality of life