

The performance of “Link Musicians” in a haemodialysis centre: a humanizing experience that improves quality of life and symptoms of depression.

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Introduction and Objective

Individuals with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), besides having to submit treatment by haemodialysis (HD) for four hours, three times a week, also undergo important changes in their way of life, in family and social relationships that culminate with the impairment of their quality of life (QoL), being also under higher risk of depression. Similar to what is already being done in several countries in Europe, we believe that the intervention of musicians, specially trained to work in hospitals and other health care areas (Link Musicians) would be a humanizing strategy for the individuals with CKD in HD which could result in improvement of these adverse conditions.

Objective: To identify the possible influence that the performance of the “Link Musicians” during HD sessions would produce in QoL, in parameters of depression and in the subjective sense of well-being of patients undergoing HD at a haemodialysis centre in Brazil.

Methods

The study included 24 patients (18 years or older) on haemodialysis for more than 6 months. Of these, 12 patients formed the control group (no intervention) and 12 patients underwent the intervention of the “Link Musicians” for five months on regular HD sessions on Saturdays. We evaluated the QoL by the questionnaire Kidney Disease and Quality of Life - Short Form (SF-KDQOL™) - v.1.3 and the state of depression by the Hamilton scale - The Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HAM-D). Also, it was applied to the patients an open questionnaire to assess how they accepted and how the intervention affected their lives. The speeches of the interviewees were submitted to thematic analysis and then to the technical analysis of the Collective Subject Discourse (Lefèvre).

Results

We observed favourable changes in QoL in the intervention group, particularly in those emotional/psychological domains. Markers of depression were high in both groups (21 out of 24 patients had moderate to severe depression scores), with a significant improvement in the intervention group only (pre-intervention 10/12 patients had moderate to severe depression scores and after intervention 6/12 patients had moderate to severe depression scores; Qui-square=0.02). Patients fully approved and expressed positive feelings during and after the intervention (attention, favourable interaction with health care team, family ties, pleasant memories).



Conclusions

We conclude therefore, that the humanizing intervention proposed by “Link Musicians” brought improvements to the environment, to the QoL, to the subjective sense of well-being and to the state of depression of patients with chronic renal failure on haemodialysis. An example of the Link Musicians performance may be watched at: <http://vimeo.com/43105902>

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