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Quality of life of women with osteoporosis

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Introduction: Osteoporosis is a chronic disease that can reduce quality of life (QoL) in a variety of ways, including diminished physical and emotional functioning. Experiencing fractures can lead to reduced mobility and may be very painful, which can limit everyday activities. Reduced activities can lead to increasing isolation, which negatively impacts upon self-esteem and self-image. Experiencing a vertebral fracture can result in fear of future vertebral fractures and anxiety is reported early in osteoporosis, which often also leads to reduced activities.

Purpose: To evaluate the impact of osteoporosis on the patients' quality of life, particularly in the absence of fractures.

Methods: 80 women (age 50-85) 60 with uncomplicated primary osteoporosis and 20 with primary osteoporosis complicated by vertebral fractures; all already treated were studied using a validated questionnaire: Qualeffo-41 for quality of life in osteoporosis. Data were compared to those of 30 controls of comparable age, affected by a different chronic disease.

Results: Family history of osteoporosis and T-score of spine were similar in the two subgroups of osteoporotic women. Body mass index, age and education level were similar in the two subgroups of osteoporotic women and in the control group. Patients perceived osteoporosis as a disease that affects their personal life with undesirable consequences: chronic pain (56% of women with fractures and 30% of women without fractures), impaired physical ability, reduced social activity, poor well-being (21% of women without fractures) and depressed mood (42% of women irrespective of fractures). Overall, 41% of the women showed a reduced QoL. On the contrary, in the control group only 11% reported a reduced QoL.

Conclusion: The quality of life of osteoporotic patients should be investigated even before fractures, in order to develop appropriate counseling, support and care interventions to help patients develop efficient strategies for accepting the disease and coping with it.

Biography

Vjollca Ndreu has a lot of experience in the academic field in physiotherapy and nursing profiles. Since the beginning of her career, she has been working as a Lecturer in the Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences, University of Medicine Tirana, Albania. Her contribution to scientific research counts a number of articles published in international journals. She is also a member of editorial boards of many scientific journals of her field of expertise.

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