

15:30 - 17:00

Meaning in Life and Stress as Determinants of Quality of Life in Stroke Patients

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Background: Stroke is a frequent life-threatening event. At first this study aims at understanding the differences between a group of stroke patients and a control, in relation to resilience, meaning in life (ML), stress and quality of life, highlighted in the reviewed literature. The second aim is to find quality of life determinants within the stroke group.

Methods: Two groups were used: the stroke group with 30 patients and a control group of 30 healthy participants, sharing similar gender, age and education level ($p > .05$). Data was collected through: a sociodemographic questionnaire; Brief Resilient Coping Scale; Perceived Stress Scale; Meaning in Life Scale-ML and WHOQOL-BREF. For data analysis parametric statistics were used: Student' t test, correlations and multiple regressions.

Findings: There were no differences between groups regarding the variables assessed, except in the WHOQOL-BREF social domain that was lower in the patients' group ($t = -2.01$, $p < .05$). Age and stress were determinants of physical quality of life in the stroke group (R^2 $A_j = .40$, $F(2,27) = 10.511$, $p < .001$); age ($B = -462$, $\beta = -.382$, $p = .013$); stress ($B = -1.256$, $\beta = -.553$, $p = .001$). For the psychological and social domains, ML was the unique determinant, respectively: (R^2 $A_j = .51$, $F(2,27) = 15.857$, $p < .001$); ML ($B = 2.320$, $\beta = .600$, $p = .001$); (R^2 $A_j = .16$, $F(2,27) = 3.673$, $p = .039$); ML ($B = 1.997$, $\beta = .528$, $p = .012$). Stress predicts the environmental domain (R^2 $A_j = .33$, $F(2,27) = 8.139$, $p = .002$); stress ($B = -.625$, $\beta = -.411$, $p = .035$).

Discussion: Stress and ML are modifiable variables amenable to psychological intervention most influencing quality of life of stroke patients. Enhancing stress reduction and reshaping ML are two major goals for improvement after a stroke.