

ORIGINAL PAPER

Health-related Quality of Life in caregivers of patients with spinal cord injury (SCI). A Greek review

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Abstract

Background: Health – related quality of life and spinal cord injuries are two parameters that are becoming a key concept in research due to medical and rehabilitative care advances resulting in extended life expectancies for those with SCI. People with SCI often have significant functional limitations and lack of independence according to their level of injury. In such cases, help from others is needed, and this is often provided by a family member. The responsibility of caregiving can lead to physical injury and emotional distress not only for the caregiver but also the person with SCI.

Aim: The objective of this study was to review the data associated with the Health-related Quality of Life in SCI patients and their family caregivers.

Methodology: A literature review of national and international studies was performed in databases of PubMed and Scopus using keywords such as spinal cord injury, caregivers, quality of life, physical activity, subjective well-being, health promotion, depression.

Results: Several studies indicate the positive impact of health promotion/wellness interventions and of social support services that could be provided for both patients and their caregivers.

Conclusions: Caregiving has been studied extensively among those providing services to elderly or cognitively impaired people. On the contrary, there has been relatively little focus on caregiving in SCI patients. Further research is needed to address strategies that could effectively optimize, support and increase not only caregiver's but also patient's quality of life.

Keywords: Spinal cord injury, caregivers, quality of life, health promotion.