

Evaluation of the quality of life and of psychosocial factors during left ventricular assist device support

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Background: Left ventricular assist devices (LVAD) are increasingly implanted for the treatment of end-stage heart failure in order to facilitate survival, myocardial recovery or as a bridge to cardiac transplantation. Technical innovation plays a significant role in improving physical activities in LVAD patients. However there is still no evaluation of the systematic psychological adaptation and quality of life (QoL) of patients living with a LVAD.

Aim: To assess the quality of life (QoL) and psychological adaptation in LVAD patients.

Methods: Twenty-two patients in LVAD program were recruited (20 men and 2 women, aged 32-70 years old). They were periodically checked by follow up and screened by using two questionnaires: the EuroQol 5D3L (EQ-5D-3L) to measure the QoL and the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) for the psychological assessment.

Results: There was no significant differences between the EQ-5D-3L and the HADS scores. LVAD patients showed an acceptable QoL (EQ-5D VAS average 62 ± 13 min 40, max 90) and low levels of anxiety and depression (HADS-A average 6 ± 3.6 , HADS-D average 6.3 ± 2.9).

Conclusions: In patients living with LVAD, there were positive trends for QoL and psychological adaptation but more data are required to confirm these findings. Considering the increasing and spreading implantation of LVAD in particularly the "destination therapy", it is crucial the implementation of counselling, focusing on the psychological impact in order to reduce the psychological morbidity and improve the QoL after LVAD implantation.