



# Pediatric Chronic Diseases and Health Related Quality of Life

**Zaky EA\***

Department of Pediatrics, Ain Shams University, Egypt

**\*Corresponding author:** Eman Ahmed Zaky, Department of Pediatrics, the President of the Egyptian Society of Mental Disorders and Children's Care, Faculty of Medicine, Ain Shams University, Abbasia, Egypt, Tel: 00201125840808; Email: emanzaky@med.asu.edu.eg

## Commentary

Volume 8 Issue 2

Received Date: May 15, 2023

Published Date: May 22, 2023

DOI: 10.23880/pprij-16000338

**Keywords:** Health Related Quality Of Life (HRQoL); Chronic Liver Diseases; Liver Transplantation; Pediatric Malignancies; Pediatric Bronchial Asthma; Depression; Anxiety and Pediatric Psychosocial Dysfunction

**Abbreviation:** HRQoL: Health Related Quality of Life.

## Introduction

Health Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) is classically defined as the functional effects of a disease and of its ensuing therapy on a patient as perceived by the patient himself [1]. It is vital to be considered in management of chronic diseases as pediatric chronic liver diseases, malignancies, and bronchial asthma especially with the recent advances in management of such disorders and expected improvement of survival rate of their sufferers.

## Health Related Quality of Life and Chronic Liver Diseases

Chronic liver diseases include a wide variety of disorders that may be infectious, metabolic, genetic, iatrogenic, idiopathic, structural, and autoimmune in origin. The clinical manifestations and the results of the initial laboratory investigations of many of them are similar. Accordingly, the final diagnosis depends on the results of specialized laboratory tests and histopathological findings of liver biopsies.

A challenging wide spectrum of medical and psychosocial problems may face the health care providers for children suffering from end-stage liver diseases. So, Health Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) is a marker of disease severity. It has been proven that psychiatric and active medical comorbidities

and not the severity of the chronic liver disease determine the effects of such disease on HRQoL of the sufferers [2]. Hassan and Zaky [3] reported significantly poorer parental and sufferer perception of HRQoL total summary score as well as its physical, emotional, and scholastic subscores.

On the other hand, in many end-stage hepatic disorders, liver transplantation is considered as the definitive life-saving therapeutic surgical intervention. The recipient quality of life improves dramatically after such a procedure and it prolongs his expected survival. Liver transplantation is a complicated surgical intervention that needs collaboration of many specialties in a devoted experienced multidisciplinary team. A psychiatrist plays a crucial role in such a team to provide the necessary pre and post-operative thorough assessment and management of both the recipient and the donor.

Many comorbid mental disorders may stand behind the decision of choosing liver transplantation as a necessity for some cases. During the post transplantation stage, psychiatric problems may arise as a critical issue requiring prompt bio psychosocial intervention for both the recipient and the donor.

## Health Related Quality of Life and Pediatric Malignancies

For the sufferers as well as their families, the management of pediatric malignancies represents a remarkable stressful event with significant biopsychosocial percussions. Because of the tremendous advances in cancer management, more therapeutic options are available nowadays for all pediatric malignancies with Higher expected survival rates. Accordingly, more attention has been directed recently towards improving the HRQoL of children diagnosed with

different types of pediatric malignancies and their families.

Zaky, et al. [4] showed significantly higher mean values of depression score among children with newly diagnosed pediatric malignancies as well as survivors compared to controls while corresponding mean values of anxiety score were only significantly higher among those with newly diagnosed different pediatric malignancies with significantly more prevalent psychosocial dysfunction compared to controls. On the other hand, parental and children perception of HRQoL total summary score and all its sub scores were significantly poorer in those with newly diagnosed pediatric malignancies as well as survivors compared to controls with the former poorer than the later. In sibs of the newly diagnosed sufferers, significantly higher mean values of anxiety scores were recorded with more prevalent psychosocial dysfunction compared to controls and sibs of survivors and poorer perception of social subscore of HRQoL.

### Health Related Quality of Life and Pediatric Bronchial Asthma

Bronchial asthma represents one of the most prevalent chronic pediatric diseases and is considered as an important public health problem with frequent hospitalization and impairment of normal activities and poorer quality of life in affected children and their caregivers [5].

Zaky, et al. [6] reported that childhood asthma lowered significantly the perception of the total HRQoL score and all its sub scores in their studied sample of Egyptian asthmatic children and their caregivers compared to controls with even poorer perception in caregivers compared to sufferers.

### Conclusion

The clinical and biological evaluation of children with chronic diseases are no longer satisfactory for professional health workers or their patients and their caregivers. Thorough psychosocial assessment becomes mandatory to evaluate the related percussions of chronic illnesses on the psychosocial status of the sufferers and their families to improve their abilities to have active social and occupational roles and empower them to enjoy a better quality of life.

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