

IMPACT OF COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT ON MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS PATIENTS' QUALITY OF LIFE

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Introduction: Cognitive impairment is not routinely assessed in the clinical evaluation of multiple sclerosis (MS) patients, yet it is as much a determinant of employment status and independence as the physical state. Studies researching MS patients' quality of life (QoL) mainly focus on disease duration, EDSS score and depression, thus the amount of data regarding cognitive impairments' effect on QoL is small. We aimed to assess the impact of cognitive decline on the patients' QoL.

Patients and methods: After noting their EDSS score, we administered the BICAMS and the MSQoL-54 batteries to 218 relapsing-remitting MS patients treated at the Department of Neurology in Szeged, who were in remission for at least 30 days. To evaluate the impact of cognitive impairment on the QoL, we calculated the Pearson correlation coefficients between the two batteries. Statistical analysis was done by PSPP 0.8.4.

Results: Average age of the patients was 44±13 years, average disease duration was 11±8 years, average EDSS score was 2.1±1.8 points and the man-woman ratio was 1:2.4. Patients with cognitive deficit rated their QoL significantly worse (p<0.05) than patients with no cognitive decline. The MSQoL-54 score correlated with the cognitive impairment, best with the SDMT subtest.

Discussion: Cognitive decline has a strong impact on the patients' QoL – the strongest aspect being the impairment of information processing speed. It occurs in patients with low EDSS scores as well. We can conclude that routine cognitive assessment of MS patients would be highly desirable.