

LONGITUDINAL EVALUATION OF THE HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE IN COVID-19 PATIENTS: A COMPARISON BETWEEN PRE-INFECTION AND THREE MONTHS POST-DISCHARGE

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The infectious disease COVID-19, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, continues to be a significant global public health emergency. Alongside the undeniable effects on physical health, there is evidence of a serious impact on mental health as well.

Our study aimed to assess changes in health-related quality of life in COVID-19 patients before hospitalization for SARS-CoV-2 infection and three months after discharge.

Data were collected from 70 participants hospitalized for COVID-19. Participants were examined twice, after admission to the hospital and three months after discharge. Quality of life was measured with the 36-item Short Form Survey (SF-36), Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI), Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ9), and Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item (GAD-7). The statistical significance of two variables in the same sample at two distinct points in time was compared using a paired-sample T-test.

There was a significant difference in PHQ9 scores before and after hospitalization ($t = 4.738, p < 0.01$). We found no significant change in PSQI score before hospitalisation or three months after discharge ($t = -.622, p = .536$). Our results showed a significant increase in GAD7 and a significant decrease in physical functioning (PF) ($t = 5.929, p < 0.01$) and role limitations due to physical health problems (RP) ($t = 4.385, p < 0.01$) scores. The findings indicate that there was no statistically significant difference between pre-infection and three months after discharge in the SF-36 questionnaire's role limitations due to emotional problems (RE) and social functioning (SF) components.

In summary, the results of our study suggest that COVID-19 patients have physical and mental health problems that may persist even after recovery and negatively affect their quality of life.

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