Health-related quality of life and survival in liver transplant candidates.

Health-related quality of life (HRQOL) is an important measure of the effects of chronic liver disease in affected patients that helps guide interventions to improve well-being. However, the relationship between HRQOL and survival in liver transplant candidates remains unclear. We examined whether the Physical Component Summary (PCS) and Mental Component Summary (MCS) scores from the Short Form 36 (SF-36) Health Survey were associated with survival in liver transplant candidates. We administered the SF-36 questionnaire (version 2.0) to patients in the Pulmonary Vascular Complications of Liver Disease study, a multicenter prospective cohort of patients evaluated for liver transplantation in 7 academic centers in the United States between 2003 and 2006. Cox proportional hazards models were used with death as the primary outcome and adjustment for liver transplantation as a time-varying covariate. The mean age of the 252 participants was 54 +/- 10 years, 64% were male, and 94% were white. During the 422 person years of follow-up, 147 patients (58%) were listed, 75 patients (30%) underwent transplantation, 49 patients (19%) died, and 3 patients were lost to follow-up. Lower baseline PCS scores were associated with an increased mortality rate despite adjustments for age, gender, Model for End-Stage Liver Disease score, and liver transplantation (P for the trend = 0.0001). The MCS score was not associated with mortality (P for the trend = 0.53). In conclusion,
PCS significantly predicts survival in liver transplant candidates, and interventions directed toward improving the physical status may be helpful in improving outcomes in liver transplant candidates.

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