ABSTRACT

Objectives: chronic nonbacterial prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome has a high incidence rate and is usually accompanied by many psychological problems. The objective of this paper was to assess the quality of life in patients with chronic nonbacterial prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome.

Methods: The study included 90 patients diagnosed with chronic nonbacterial prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome. The quality of life was studied using the National Institute of Health-Chronic Prostatitis Symptom Index (NIH-CPSI).

Results: 54 (60%) patients reported sexual potency problems, 66 (73.3%) found that their disease received insufficient medical attention, 93.9% reported a large number of symptom-related problems affecting the performance of daily activities, all patients were thinking about the disease symptoms, and 77.7% reported that they would be unsatisfied if told that they would spend the rest of their lives with the symptoms experienced over the last week.

Conclusion: Chronic nonbacterial prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome causes sexual potency problems and significantly impairs patients’ quality of life. In addition, the respondents believe that their condition is not treated with sufficient medical attention.

Keywords: quality of life, chronic nonbacterial prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome, sexual potency

INTRODUCTION

Chronic prostatitis is a disease with a high incidence rate in men aged 20 – 50, and is recognized as a worldwide health problem [1-3]. Up to date, the disease has remained a poorly studied and little understood condition. From the perspective of a patient, this condition is a very unpleasant and disquieting experience. The disease is not seen as causing work-related disability, yet in some cases it can become a social problem. In other words, even though benign in its nature, the disease may cause psychological problems [4]. Even during the most productive years of life, the patient can start losing his interest in job and sexual life, his labour productivity can also start declining, and also the patient can start feeling inferior to others and sometimes can suffer from neurasthenia. Persons suffering from this disease are usually psychologically unstable tending to exaggerate existing symptoms, which actually supports the statement of Boehminghaus that once diagnosed; prostatis remains forever [5]. On the other hand, a highly complex nature of this condition, as well as expensive diagnostic procedures and treatments also outline that chronic prostatitis is a very serious medical and public health issue [6-8]. The patient presents to his general practitioner usually with the symptoms of urinary tract, impaired quality of life, sexual potency problems, disturbed sleep, pain and discomfort in the lower pelvic area [9].

Many previous research studies dealing with the treatment of the patients with chronic prostatitis resulted in the creation of the National Institute for Health Chronic Prostatitis Symptom Index in 1999 and the recognition thereof. The final version of the Index comprises 9 items dealing with location, severity and frequency of pain [8-10].

The aim of our study was to assess quality of life and sexual potency problems in men with nonbacterial prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome and for the
purpose of the study, only the answers that influence quality of life were analysed.

**Materials and methods**

A prospective analytical clinical study was conducted and included 90 respondents, all diagnosed with chronic nonbacterial prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome. The study was performed at the Urology Clinic at the Clinical Centre University of Sarajevo, during a period between January – November 2004. The quality of life was studied using the National Institute of Health-Chronic Prostatitis Symptom Index (NIH-CPSI) (Table 1). National Institute for Health Chronic Prostatitis Symptom Index comprises 9 items dealing with location, severity and frequency of pain. The Index also includes items addressing urinary functions and quality of life. For each item, score ranges from 0 – 31.

After a detailed medical history had been taken, each patient filled out the questionnaire (alone or physician-assisted).

**Results**

General characteristics of the patients are shown in Table 2. Mean symptoms score was 13.2±2.62, while severity of pain score was 6.08±1.37. Overall, the quality of life score was 3.3±0.70. Sexual potency problems were reported by 54 (60%) patients, while 66 (73.3%) said that their condition was not treated with sufficient medical attention.

Table 2. General characteristics of the patients with chronic nonbacterial prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameters</th>
<th>Data presented as mean±SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>40.3±8.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIH-CPSI</td>
<td>25.8±4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms score</td>
<td>13.2±2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severity of pain score</td>
<td>6.08±1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary symptom score</td>
<td>2.6±0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life score</td>
<td>3.3±0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual urine</td>
<td>18.7±15.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q max.</td>
<td>20.4±6.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostate Volume</td>
<td>27.6±6.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the questions: “How much have your symptoms kept you from doing things you would usually do, over the last week?”, 18 (20%) patients reported that disease symptoms significantly affected the performance of their daily activities, 51 (56.6%) reported to be affected to some extent, 20 (22.2%) were affected only a little, and 1 (1.11%) patient reported not to be affected at all. Patients suffering from chronic prostatitis are very concerned about their condition and they spend a lot of time thinking about it; According to the results obtained in relation to question 9 (If you were to spend the rest of your life with your symptoms just the way they have been during the last week, how would you feel about that?), 18 (20%) patients reported that they were not thinking too much about the disease symptoms (only a little), 53 (57.6%) reported that they were thinking about the disease occasionally, whereas 20 (22.2%) reported they were thinking a lot about it. According to the results obtained in relation to question 7 (How much have your symptoms kept you from doing things you would usually do, over the last week?), the patients were offered a set of answers. No patient reported to feel delighted or pleased. 7 (7.77%) patients felt mostly satisfied, 48 (53.3%) mixed, 25 (27.7) mostly unsatisfied, 8 (8.88%) unhappy, and 2 (2.22%) felt terrible.

**Discussion**

Chronic prostatitis is a very unpleasant condition which still remains poorly understood disorder, and as such is a very frustrating situation for the patient.
Those affected by this condition, even in the most productive years of their lives, experience problems such as labor productivity decline, impaired quality of life, psychological and sexual problems [11-12]. However, the impact of chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome should be considered from different perspectives [13]. NIH-CPSI items addressing the quality of life assess whether or not the disease symptoms affect the patient’s performance of daily activities, to what extent the patient has been thinking about the disease, and how the patient would feel if told that he would spend the rest of his life with the same symptoms experienced over the last seven days. In discussing the impact of prostatitis on quality of life, one must also take into account that this condition causes certain psychological problems. In other words, the patients suffering from this disease often tend to exaggerate existing symptoms which results in the creation of a disproportional relationship between the patients’ perception (descriptions) and actual symptoms [14-15].

In addition, many urologists believe that the patient’s attitude towards the disease and symptom severity may be a consequence of educational and cultural background [16]. In other words, a person suffering from prostatitis might think that the doctor “is hiding” the truth from him, and at the same time such patient might convince himself that he actually suffers from the prostate tumour. The NIH-CPSI analysis has shown that many patients experience symptom-related problems in doing their everyday activities. Only 1 patient reported not to have the problems of this kind. In addition, the analysis has also revealed that most patients would feel mixed (both satisfactory and unsatisfactory) if told that they would spend the rest of their lives with the disease symptoms.

The impact of prostatitis on quality of life is multifactorial which supports Boehmingshaus’ statement that once diagnosed, the prostatitis remains forever [17]. The statistical data obtained by this research study has revealed that, although rarely considered life-threatening, the patients are usually very concerned about their condition which directly affects their psychological state. Recent studies of psychological condition in patients with chronic prostatitis have shown that some psychological factors are indeed relevant to this disease – however, this group of patients cannot be classified as neurotic [18-19].

Questions regarding sexual potency problems were not included in the NIHCP Index, but were taken from the patient health questionnaire. 54 (60%) patients, being in the most productive years of life, reported sexual potency problems which significantly impair their quality of life and overall mental status. These patients usually become psychologically unstable due to the fact that sexual potency problems and quality of life are in a direct correlation. The research findings have also revealed that 66 (73.3%) patients believe their health condition did not receive sufficient medical attention. They considered diagnostic procedures incomplete while prescribed treatments were seen as not being tailored to the patient’s symptoms. This clearly suggests that the collection of detailed medical history data and the objective analysis of the patient’s symptoms have a strong impact on mental status of this group of patients [20].

**Conclusion**

Patients with chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome experience impaired quality of life and are very concerned about their condition which triggers certain psychological problems, usually accompanied by depression. They also suffer from sexual potency problems and believe that their condition is not treated with sufficient medical attention.

**Declaration of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest for this study.

**References**


