

CHANGES IN QUALITY OF LIFE OF PICU SURVIVORS

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Background: After a progressive decrease in PICU mortality rates in the last decades more attention is being directed to evaluate morbidity and health related quality of life (HRQOL) of survivors to paediatric intensive care (PIC). In order to evaluate the changes in HRQOL of patients submitted to PIC we launched a project in three major Portuguese PICUs.

Material and Methods: HUI3 is a 40 items HRQOL questionnaire about 8 attributes (Vision, Hearing, Speech, Ambulation, Dexterity, Emotion, Cognition, Pain) and the score varies between -0.36 and 1.00. If changes between questionnaires were >0.05 patients "Improved", between -0.05 and 0.05 had "No change" and <-0.05 "Worsened" his HRQOL.

The questionnaire was administered by interview to a patient proxy, immediately after admission and six months later by phone, referring to the health status during the week previous to the interview. All children aged 6 or older were included, after obtain informed consent.

Results: From the 1279 admissions (01/May/02 to 30/Apr/04), 1004 were excluded due to age(841), death in PICU(44) or miscellaneous causes(119). In 62 cases, the time since admission was less than 6 months. Six months after the admission, 168 (out of 213) patients were interviewed. Only one patient died in this time interval. Most of the children "Improved"(31%) or had "No change"(25%) in their overall HRQOL index. The most affected attributes were Cognition(35%;14%), Emotion(32%;23%) and Pain(19%;28%), respectively for worsening and improvement of attribute. Evaluation by diagnostic group (Trauma, Elective postoperative and Others) showed a "Worsened" HRQOL in 73%, 34% and 30% patients, respectively ($p<0.001$).

Conclusions: Changes are more frequent in attributes of Pain, Cognition and Emotion but this could be due, at least in part, to a more subjective evaluation from proxies. Most of the children admitted to PICU maintain or improve their HRQOL justifying the high costs associated with their care.