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Quality of life and cochlear implant: results in adults
with postlingual hearing loss[☆]

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KEYWORDS

Cochlear
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Abstract

Introduction: Considering the variability of results found in the clinical population using a cochlear implant, researchers in the area have been interested in the inclusion of quality of life measures to subjectively assess the benefits of the implantation.

Objective: To assess the quality of life of adult users of CI.

Methods: A cross-sectional and clinical study in a group of 26 adults of both genders, with mean duration of CI use of 6.6 years. The Nijmegen Cochlear Implantation Questionnaire and the generic World Health Organization Quality of Life questionnaire were sent electronically.

Results: The best assessed domain in the quality of life assessment for the cochlear implantation questionnaire was the social domain, whereas for the quality of life questionnaire it was the psychological domain. The variables, gender, time of cochlear implant use and auditory modality did not influence the results of both questionnaires. Only the variable level of education was correlated with the environment domain of the quality of life questionnaire. The variable telephone speech comprehension was associated with a better perception of quality of life for all the domains of the specific questionnaire and for the self-assessment of quality of life in general.

Conclusion: From the users' perspective, both questionnaires showed that the cochlear implant use brought benefits to different aspects related to quality of life.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Implante coclear;
Qualidade de vida;
Perda auditiva;
Adulto;
Surdez

Qualidade de vida e implante coclear: resultados em adultos com deficiência auditiva pós-lingual**Resumo**

Introdução: Diante da variabilidade de resultados encontrada na população clínica usuária de Implante Coclear, pesquisadores da área têm se interessado pela inclusão de medidas de qualidade de vida para avaliar de maneira subjetiva os benefícios do IC.

Objetivo: Avaliar a qualidade de vida de adultos usuários de IC.

Método: Estudo transversal e clínico em um grupo de 26 adultos, de ambos os gêneros, com tempo de uso médio do implante coclear de 6,6 anos. Foram utilizados o questionário específico *Nijmegen de Implantes Cocleares* e o questionário genérico *World Health Organization Quality of Life*, enviados via mídia eletrônica.

Resultados: O domínio melhor pontuado na avaliação da qualidade de vida para o questionário *Nijmegen* foi o social e para o questionário *World Health Organization Quality of Life* foi o psicológico. As variáveis, gênero, tempo de uso do implante coclear e modalidade auditiva não influenciaram os resultados de ambos os questionários. Apenas a variável nível de instrução correlacionou-se com o domínio meio ambiente do questionário sobre qualidade de vida. A variável compreensão de fala ao telefone associou-se a uma melhor percepção da qualidade de vida para todos os domínios do questionário específico e para a autoavaliação da qualidade de vida em geral.

Conclusão: Na perspectiva dos usuários, o uso do implante coclear trouxe benefícios para os diversos aspectos relacionados à qualidade de vida em ambos os questionários.

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Introduction

Several studies have shown the effectiveness of the cochlear implant (CI) through the assessment of hearing and language skills; however, these tests are limited in terms of the impact of such treatment on social relations, well-being, and the individual's ability for easy communication, all aspects related to the quality of life.

Researchers in the area have been interested in the inclusion of measures that can more fully evaluate the impact of hearing impairment and the available possibilities of habilitation and rehabilitation, using, for this purpose, quality of life measures.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines quality of life as "the individuals' perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns."¹

The emphasis given in recent years to the subjective and multidimensional aspects related to quality of life was, therefore, derived from the need to understand the impact of a particular complaint and its treatment from the patient's point of view. This allows the analysis of health through different domains, such as physical, functional, social and emotional.¹

Some tools are available to evaluate the population's quality of life and, among them, the generic questionnaires, used in the general population, without specifying the pathologies, and the specific questionnaires, designed to evaluate the quality of life in a population that has or had a certain disability.²

It is necessary to better understand the different aspects related to quality of life of the adult population that uses CI, aiming to obtain more detailed information, which will allow professionals to assist in the CI process, in the validation of the results of this technology, as well as in the management of the therapeutic process.

Therefore, the aim of this study was to assess the quality of life in adult CI users and to verify the associations between age, gender, level of education, hearing status and telephone use for the different aspects related to quality of life.

Methods

This was a cross-sectional and clinical study that assessed the quality of life in 26 adult users of CI, 14 females and 12 males, aged between 18 and 62 years with mean duration of 80 months of CI use.

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the institution under opinion n. 442/15. All participants received an invitation letter through electronic mail. After agreeing to participate in the research, they signed the Free and Informed Consent form.

Quality of life assessment was performed using the Nijmegen Cochlear Implant questionnaire (NCIQ-P) and the generic World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL-bref) questionnaire, accessed and answered online. All the documents (letter of research presentation, informed consent form and NCIQ-P and WHOQOL-bref questionnaires) were made available at the Google Docs platform of online questionnaires.

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