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Special Article

The impact of colostomy on the patient's life

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To evaluate the emotional, psychological, sexual, social, and professional impact, before and after surgery, on individuals submitted to a colostomy.

Methods: The study was carried out in two stages, with the participation of 15 individuals. First, we evaluated the emotional, psychic, sexual, social, and professional aspects of their lives, in the preoperative period of colostomy surgery. After that, the same aspects were evaluated six months after the surgery. This evaluation was based on the application of a questionnaire with 16 objective questions.

Results: Of the interviewees, 53.64% decreased their willingness to go out and do activities outside their homes, with a statistical significance of $p=0.001$. Regarding the environment, 53.85% of the interviewees showed a perception of worsening of the environment. About physical activity, 66.65% showed a difference in the performance of physical activity after colostomy, being statistically significant, with $p=0.001$. The sports environment did not change in 50% of the participants. Patient sexuality showed a significant decline with statistical significance ($p=0.008$).

Conclusion: The impact that the colostomy generated on the patients' lives, regarding the evaluated aspects, was perceptible, being of great importance the careful indication of this procedure to the patient.

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O impacto da colostomia na vida de seus portadores

RESUMO

Objetivos: Avaliar o impacto emocional, psíquico, sexual, social e profissional, pré e pós colostomia, em indivíduos que passaram por cirurgia de colostomia.

Método: Foi realizado em duas etapas com participação de 15 indivíduos. Na primeira houve avaliação sobre os aspectos emocional, psíquico, sexual, social e profissional de suas vidas, no momento pré-operatório à cirurgia de colostomia. Na segunda avaliaram-se os mesmos

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aspectos seis meses após a cirurgia. Esta avaliação foi a partir da aplicação de um questionário com 16 questões objetivas.

Resultados: Dos entrevistados, 53,64% diminuíram a vontade de sair e fazer atividades fora do lar, com significância estatística de $p=0,001$. Quanto ao ambiente instalado, em 53,85% dos entrevistados apresentaram percepção de piora do ambiente. Em relação à atividade física, 66,65% dos participantes apresentaram diferença no desempenho da atividade física pós-colostomia, sendo este dado estatisticamente significativo com $p=0,001$. O ambiente esportivo não mudou para 50% dos participantes. A sexualidade do paciente evidenciou grande decaimento com significância estatística ($p=0,008$).

Conclusão: Foi perceptível o impacto que a colostomia gerou na vida de seus portadores nos aspectos avaliados, sendo de grande importância a indicação criteriosa desse procedimento ao paciente.

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Introduction

Colostomy is a surgical procedure that aims to divert intestinal transit when it is anatomically impossible for fecal excretion to occur through the anal canal. The surgical technique used to perform this procedure consists in the incision of the colon wall and its posterior exteriorization in the abdominal wall, allowing the excretion of feces and gases.¹

Many pathologies affecting the lower gastrointestinal tract can culminate in a colostomy, such as diverticulitis, colorectal tumors, colon and rectum trauma, inflammatory diseases, and congenital anomalies.² Depending on the etiology that led to the need for a colostomy, it may be permanent or temporary.³

Regarding the number of ostomized individuals, there are 33,864 people with this condition in Brazil, and in the State of São Paulo alone there are 9200 individuals.⁴

It is important to mention that the colostomized individuals do not go through a physical transformation only, but also through a psychosocial one, making them face anxieties, fears and adaptations to their body's self-image^{3,5-10} and such issues should be addressed by health professionals, including the physician.

In a systematic review of the literature,¹¹ the analyzed articles mentioned alterations related to the colostomy: sexual problems, depression, constipation, intestinal gases, dissatisfaction with one's physical appearance, difficulties when traveling, changes in the wardrobe, fatigue, and concern with ostomy sounds. Thus, there is a decline in social participation, since individuals often isolate themselves from others, in addition to often feeling that people who used to be close to them have become distant.¹² Changes in the sexual life of the colostomized individual are due to loss of libido, change in one's body self-image and fear of leakage of feces or gases during sexual intercourse.⁶

Considering all the above, this study is necessary, since the physician who will assist these individuals must be aware of the changes that affect them caused by the colostomy.¹³

Therefore, the aim of this study was to evaluate the emotional, psychological, sexual, social and professional impact of the colostomy on individuals submitted to this type of intervention, comparing these aspects before and after the surgery.

Method

The present study was submitted to the Ethics and Research Committee of Universidade de Mogi das Cruzes (UMC), and approved under number 696,332 and to the Research Ethics Committee of Hospital das Clínicas Luzia de Pinho Melo, of which approval is under N. 003/14. All the study participants signed the Free and Informed Consent form.

Fifteen individuals submitted to a colostomy surgery were invited to participate in the study from August 2014 to November 2014. As there were two deaths at the end of the study, the number of participants comprised 13 individuals. The number of subjects was defined based on the number of individuals who underwent this procedure and met the inclusion criteria used in this study, mentioned later. All subjects answered the questionnaire in the hospital, while they were hospitalized, at the preoperative or postoperative period of the colostomy.

All individuals aged 20 years or older with cognitive integrity and who agreed to voluntarily participate in the study, after signing the Free and Informed Consent form, were included in this study.

Individuals who had significant impairments, such as cognitive function impairment, severe or profound auditory impairment without intervention, or those who had comprehension difficulties were not chosen to participate in the study, as well as those who could not sign their names and who did not have a guardian to do so on their behalf.

The study was divided into two stages. The first one consisted in the assessment of some general aspects of the individuals' life, in the preoperative period of the colostomy surgery. In the second part, the same aspects were assessed, but six months after the surgery, aiming to assess whether there were differences between the preoperative and postoperative responses.

The evaluation was carried out through a questionnaire that included questions regarding the general identification of the individual, including academic, professional questions, as well as questions on the time of surgery.

Aspects of the social, professional, physical, and sexual life of the colostomized patient were also evaluated based on the application of a questionnaire with 12 objective questions,

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