

Abstract

Background: Peritoneal dialysis (PD) is the most common form of renal replacement therapy for end-stage renal failure in Hong Kong. Previous studies in other countries have shown an increased rate of depression in this group of patients. However the local scenario has not yet been investigated.

Aims: To identify the prevalence and correlates of depression among Chinese PD patients and to evaluate the effectiveness of the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) as a screening instrument for depression in local Chinese patients receiving peritoneal dialysis.

Method: In this cross-sectional study, 141 PD patients were recruited in a local renal clinic from October 2007 to June 2008. All participants were interviewed by the author using the Chinese Bilingual version of Structured Clinical Interview for Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition (Axis I) (CB-SCID-I) to identify patients who suffered from major depressive disorders and psychiatric illnesses associated with elevated depressive symptoms. Sociodemographic and clinical data were collected. Co-morbid medical illnesses and perceived social support were assessed by standardized questionnaires, Cumulative Illness Rating Scale (CIRS) and the Chinese version of Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). The HADS was administered, the scores of which were compared against the diagnosis of major depression and elevated depressive symptoms.

Results: The point prevalence of current major depressive episode was 16.3%. Another 20.6% of patients had at least one past episode of major depression but were not suffering from a current episode. A further 5% of patients were diagnosed to have psychiatric conditions associated with elevated depressive symptoms. Low MSPSS score, physical distress from muscle cramps and chronic back pain were found to be the independent correlates of both major depressive disorder and elevated depressive symptoms. Distress from joint stiffness and receiving social security allowance were the independent correlates of elevated depressive symptoms only. The HADS is effective in screening for current depressive disorder and psychiatric conditions associated with elevated depressive symptoms using the cut-off at 16 with good sensitivity and specificity.

Conclusion: The prevalence of depression is high in Chinese patients receiving PD. The independent correlates and using the HADS as a screening tool are useful to help the physicians to identify patients suffering from depressive disorders in busy renal clinics.

Keywords: Peritoneal dialysis, depression, prevalence, correlates, Chinese