

Abstract

Objectives: To explore the needs of community living schizophrenia patients and to study the relationship between needs and quality of life in this group of patients.

Patients and Methods: Two hundred consecutive patients attending the Tuen Mun Mental Health Centre with principal diagnosis of schizophrenia were recruited. Patients were interviewed and their socio-demographic data, psychotic symptoms, negative symptoms, depressive symptoms, psychosocial functioning, extrapyramidal side effects were assessed and recorded. Patient-rated needs were evaluated by the Cantonese version of the Camberwell Assessment of Need (Ng, 2003) while their subjective quality of life was assessed by the Hong Kong Chinese Version of the World Health Organization Quality of Life Scale-Brief Version (Leung, Tay, Cheng and Lin, 1997).

Results: Company of others (40.5%) and daytime activities (34.5%) were the two commonest domains of unmet needs reported by the participants. Bivariate analysis showed that the number of unmet need was significantly correlated with a poorer subjective quality of life. Further multiple regression analysis demonstrated that unmet needs in company of others, psychological distress, basic education and self care skills, as well as depressive symptoms and positive symptoms significantly predicted a poorer subjective quality of life. Unmet need in company of others was

the only unmet need domain found to have significant contribution to 84% variance of social quality of life.

Conclusion: Subjective quality of life in schizophrenia patients was predicted by unmet social needs at most in the present model. If the main goal of mental health care is to improve the quality of life of users, a policy of addressing patient-rated needs, aiming at meeting patient's level of social functioning and giving support in building social relations should be advocated. This study identified priority areas for the attention of clinicians and policy makers who seek to improve the quality of life of community living schizophrenia patients.

Key Words: community, needs, quality of life, schizophrenia