

Dyspnea and Health-Related Quality of Life in Patients with Persistent Symptoms after at Least Six Months of Hospital Discharge Due to COVID-19

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OBJECTIVES

To evaluate dyspnea in patients with persistent symptoms after at least six months of hospital discharge due to COVID-19 and its correlation with the quality of life, fatigue, and functional status.

METHODS

This cross-sectional study included 101 patients with persistent symptoms after at least six months of hospital discharge for COVID-19. A physician evaluated dyspnea using the Modified Medical Research Council (mMRC) scale questionnaire, the quality of life with the EQ-5D-5L, fatigue with an analog scale (0=no fatigue to 10=worst possible fatigue), and functional status with the Post-COVID-19 Functional Status scale (PCFS, grade 0=no limitation to grade 4=severe limitation). We used Fisher’s exact test for categorical data and the Wilcoxon rank-sum test for continuous data to assess differences across groups. Spearman’s test was used for correlations. The significance level was 5%.

RESULTS

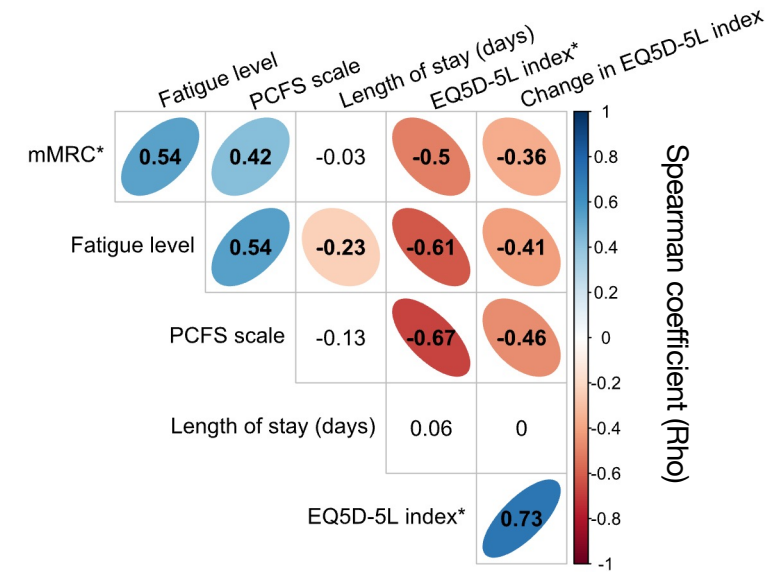
Of the participants, 56.4 % (n=57) were women with a mean age of 57.7 (SD±16.3) years. The most reported symptoms were muscle weakness (61.4%, n=62), dyspnea (51.5%, n=52), muscle pain (49.5%, n=50), and fatigue 41 (40.6%, n=41).

Table 1. Post-COVID-19 Outcomes by ICU admission

Parameter	Non-ICU (n = 156)	ICU (n = 46)	Total	p
Change in mMRC after COVID-19				0.325
Less breathless	54 (74.0%)	17 (63.0%)	72 (71.3%)	
No change	19 (26.0%)	10 (37.0%)	29 (28.7%)	
EQ5D-5L change in overall summary index				0.008
Median (IQR)	-0.07 (-0.11 a - 0.03)	-0.12 (-0.16 to -0.061)	0,01 (-0.14 to -0.05)	
Washington Group Short Set (WG-SS)				0.948
New or worse	58 (78.4%)	21 (77.8%)	79 (78.2%)	
No change	16 (21.6%)	6 (22.2%)	22 (21.8%)	
Fatigue level (Fatigue level (0 to 10 VAS)				0.634
Median (IQR)	3 (3 to 4)	3.000 (2 to 4.5)	3 (2 to 4)	

ICU - Intensive Care Unit

Figure 1. Correlation of breathlessness (mMRC) with clinical variables and health outcomes after COVID-19.



In blank non-significant coefficient. *Reported in medical visit

CONCLUSIONS

Dyspnea is prevalent among patients discharge for COVID-19 with persistent symptoms and may affect their quality of life and functional status.