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SIDE EFFECTS OF TREATMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG PATIENTS WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA

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The aim of our study was to assess the treatment side effects and their implications on quality of life in a population of schizophrenic patients.

We included 50 patients with schizophrenia treated at the psychiatry department of the university hospital in Sfax (Tunisia). We used the PANSS, the UKU side effect rating scale and the SF-36 to assess, respectively, the severity of disease, the treatment side effects and the quality of life. The statistical analysis was carried out by software SPSS.

The assessment of quality of life revealed a global average score of 59.11 and an alteration in 54% of patients. Impaired quality of life was significantly correlated with irregular follow-up ($p = 0.02$), bad treatment compliance ($p = 0.016$) and polytherapy ($p = 0.024$). The presence of side effects which affect either moderately or severely daily activity was significantly correlated with impaired quality of life ($p = 0.007$). The presence of side effects was correlated in a significant way with altered quality of life ($p=0,007$).

Our study showed a relatively high frequency of side effects of treatment in patients with schizophrenia. They were correlated with impaired quality of life. They are also factors of bad compliance. Reduction and prevention of side effects requires the use of atypical antipsychotics which are better tolerated and more active on negative symptoms. However, they pose the problem of high costs. But it must be noted here that the overall cost of disease is higher with conventional antipsychotics than with atypical ones.