

The Quality of Life in Illegal Drug Users Treated for Hepatitis C in the REMEDIS Health Care Institution



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BACKGROUND: Undoubtedly, the quality of life is a topical issue and one that is addressed from a range of perspectives. Nevertheless, this phenomenon has only received marginal attention in the Czech Republic as far as addictology is concerned, although thorough research into the quality of life definitely has its relevance for this field of study. The hepatitis C virus (HCV) is a common dual diagnosis among injecting users of illegal substances. It is apparent that the quality of life should be a significant element in evaluating the effectiveness of the treatment of HCV or in designing new schemes for it. Therefore, it is essential to examine the quality of life of drug users in treatment for hepatitis C. **METHODS:** In the first half of 2008 data collected by means of the RAND 36-Item Health Survey (SF 36) in the REMEDIS centre were collated for the purposes of this study. A total of 160 questionnaires were available. Out of these, only 45 questionnaires completed at the beginning of treatment and 47 questionnaires completed after treatment could be evaluated. The data were analysed in two

groups – prior to HCV treatment and after it – using basic statistical procedures. **SAMPLE:** The sample comprises the clients of the REMEDIS centre who have completed their treatment for HCV. A total of 87 clients, 45 men and 42 women aged 33.49 years on average, were included in the sample. The pre-treatment study group comprised 20 men and 25 women (with an average age of 28.51 years), and the post-treatment group consisted of 26 men and 19 women (30.98 years old on average). **RESULTS:** There are differences in the quality of life of drug users – both men and women – prior to and after their treatment for HCV. In both groups, the women's total quality of life index was higher than that measured in the men. In addition, it was found that the quality of life in the post-HCV treatment group was lower than that in the pre-treatment group. **CONCLUSIONS:** When compared to the available Czech standards, the quality of life only shows lower levels in the post-HCV treatment. When measured against the British and American standards, the quality of life shows lower levels for both groups.

KEY WORDS: QUALITY OF LIFE – TREATMENT OF HEPATITIS C – DRUG USERS – SF-36 QUESTIONNAIRE – REMEDIS

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