

MECHANICALLY VENTILATED PATIENTS AT HOME: QUALITY OF LIFE, LEVEL OF FUNCTIONING AND THE IMPACT ON THEIR CAREGIVERS

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The purpose of the study was to determine selected aspects of quality of life in home ventilated patients and their caregivers. Forty-five (45) ventilated patients and their caregivers were enrolled in the study. An original questionnaire was completed by the patients and their caregivers. The patients' questionnaire included 22 questions concerning the duration of home ventilation, its causes and psycho-physical state. Moreover, the patients completed the Katz Scale. The caregivers' questionnaire included 19 questions focusing on: the caregiver's education, gaps and inadequacies while providing non-professional home care as well as the problems and worries accompanying this task. The caregivers also completed the HADS-M - anxiety and depression scale. The results demonstrated that the self-reliance of ventilated patients is very low. Fear, sorrow, uncertainty and anxiety were the most frequent reactions to the information about home ventilation. Only 25% of the caregivers have the necessary equipment that would make the care easier at the patients' home. Nearly half of the caregivers complained of back pain. Fatigue and exhaustion were the dominant symptoms regarding the caregivers. Depression disorders as well as emotional burn-out were observed in most caregivers. Introduction of a uniform educational program for caregivers will allow them to provide better care for the ventilated patients. It will also help eliminate burn-out and improve the quality of life in both - the patients and caregivers..