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Quality of life after heart transplantation

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Purpose: In modern era with technology advances, new immunospressive drugs, better postoperative care and mechanical circulatory support, heart transplantation (HTx) remains the best surgical treatment option for patients with end-stage heart failure. After postoperative treatment and discharge the follow-up is done in out-patient clinic for HTx. After the operation these patients have new life situation with potential problems and questions to be answered. We researched what is quality of life after HTx and how patients adapt to new life situation.

Methods: In a university hospital between 1995 and 2014 117 patients underwent HTx. Early mortality was 14% (17 pts), and late mortality was 13% (13 pts). Two patients were lost from follow-up, and 85 are visiting out-patient clinic for HTx. Out of that number around 30 patients are followed-up in other institutions. This prospective study was designed to compare quality of life, life satisfaction and subjective ratings of health after HTx. Fifty patients were enrolled in this study.

Results: Average score of life quality in range from 1 – 10 was 7. Patient expectations after transplantation were scored with average score 6.3. The biggest problems represent the fear of rejection of the new organ, concern for the future, frequent infections, compliance of continuously taking therapy, incidence of secondary malignancy and the control of newly developed diabetes.

Conclusion: Quality of life parameters were significantly improved after successful heart transplantation with time needed to adapt to new drugs, follow-up and therapy management.