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Determine the self-esteem of children with congenital heart disease

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Background: Most studies identified lower self-esteem in patients with CHD according to body image involves perceptions, thoughts, and behaviors related to one's appearance. In patients with CHD, require surgical procedures that leave visible surgical scars and physical deficits, lower perceived body-image and self-esteem controls.

Method: This is a cross sectional study to determine the self-esteem of CHD children among 600 hospitalized children between 6-16 yrs. in Mofid, Shahid Rajaei, Khatamolanbia Hospitals in Tehran during 2015-2017 that randomly selected. Data collected by demographic, Body-image and self-esteem were measured using the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire–Appearance Scale and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

Results: High severity of the child's disease (require surgical procedures) is significantly associated with the patients' low self-esteem. Gender is significantly associated with the patients' low self-esteem. Male patients with CHD as having lower self-esteem than female patients with CHD, which was partly explained by decreased physical ability or sports restrictions interfering with peer relationship. Gender is significantly associated with the patients' low perceived body image. Female patients with CHD (surgical scars) reported lower body image compared with males patients with CHD (surgical scars) ($p = 0.002$). Psychological symptoms in female patients with CHD were strongly influenced by body-image perception, especially if they rejected for their body as a result of disfigurement or a perceived deficiency. Perceived body image is significantly associated with the patients' low self-esteem. Patients with CHD were interviewed or surveyed about their experiences, attitudes, or impact of their surgical scar and reported feeling self-conscious or negative attitudes about their body and scars is significantly associated with low self-esteem. Results showed that the change in body image including the delay in physical growth regarding the height and the weight, which varies depending on the type and severity of the disease, exerts a negative influence on their world view. All factors (cardiac deficit, the frequent hospital admissions, the lack of social acceptance that led to isolation from the friendly environment and make anger, anxiety and depression in children with CHD) exert a negative world view, is significantly associated with the patients' low self-esteem. The restriction of their physical activities, which either the physician, parents or their physical condition imposes. Decrease of their children's physical activity led to abstention from pleasurable activities because of the limitations imposed by the physical impairment, is significantly associated with the patients' low self-esteem. Family environment, the children's role in it, and the relation with the other members such as brothers, grandfather, grandmother, form the level of acceptance of the disease, the compliance to the treatment, and the child's response to stress caused by the disease is significantly associated with the patients' self-esteem level. Furthermore, "overprotective" behavior of the parents who sometimes do not allow the children to take their own initiative, and at the same time reduce their ability to take care of themselves, is significantly associated with the patients' low self-esteem. Parental anxiety and depression affect self-esteem of children. Poor socio-economic and low educational level status of the family and Parents' marital status (Single parent, separated, widow...) are significantly associated with the patients' low self-esteem.

Conclusions: Results support the need to recognize poor psychological adjustment related to low self-esteem in patients with CHD; female patients warrant increased scrutiny. Strategies to help patients with CHD cope with no modifiable aspects of body-image during the difficult child to adolescent years may potentially enhance self-esteem and decrease psychological distress (hopelessness, anxiety & depression).

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