

Correlates of health-related quality of life of ambulatory stroke survivors in Jamaica

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Purpose: The aim of the study was to determine the factors related to health-related quality of life (HRQL) in ambulatory chronic stroke survivors in Jamaica.

Methods: This was a secondary analysis of a randomized controlled trial done to determine the effects of aerobic exercise on HRQL. Persons included had completed formal rehabilitation and were able to walk with or without an assistive device. HRQL was assessed using the Medical Outcomes 36-Item Short Form Health Survey (SF-36), functional status using the Barthel Index and the Older American Resource and Services Questionnaire (OARS), grip strength using a dynamometer, lower extremity using the Motricity Index, depression using the Geriatric Depression Scale and endurance using the six minute walk test. Data were analyzed using the t-test, correlation coefficient and linear regression.

Results: 128 persons participated (mean age: 64 years; mean time post stroke: 12 months). The Physical Health Component (PHC) of the SF-36 was positively associated with distance walked in six minutes ($r=.395$; $p<.000$), grip strength on the affected side ($r=.309$; $p<.000$) lower limb strength on the affected side ($r=.287$; $p=.001$), Barthel Index ($r=.253$; $p=.004$), OARS ($r=.378$; $p<.000$) and depressive symptoms ($p=-.353$; $p=.000$). The Mental Health Component was significantly related to GDS ($r=-.391$; $p=.000$) and unaffected side lower limb strength ($r=.251$; $p=.004$). Socio-demographic factors were not significantly related to HRQL. Six minute walk distance and GDS scores were independent predictors of the PHC of SF-36.

Conclusions: In ambulatory stroke survivors in Jamaica, motor impairment, endurance and depression affect HRQL long after stroke onset. Strategies to address these could impact HRQL positively.

Biography

Gordon obtained her Ph.D. from the University of the West Indies and is presently a lecturer and the Director of Physical Therapy Programmes at the University. She has over 25 years experience as a physical therapist and has published in peer-reviewed journals.

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