

QUALITY OF LIFE AND HIDDEN SYMPTOMS IN PATIENTS DIAGNOSED WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

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**Objective:** Patients with multiple sclerosis, experience a big number of symptoms. Some are easy to be seen, but most of them are hidden. Unfortunately, if the patients don't know that MS is responsible for this symptoms, and don't talk about them, they remain uninvestigated and untreated, affecting severely their quality of life (QoL), despite no evidence of disease activity. EDSS associated with other scales should be performed in order to increase patient's QoL.

**Method:** We examined 32 MS patients (24 women and 8 male), aged 19 to 61 years, who completed the Your MS Questionnaire and were evaluated with the rating scales: EDSS, MSQOL54, Fatigue Severity Scale, Epworth Sleepiness Scale, BICAMS, The Bladder-Bowel Questionnaire and Multiple Sclerosis Intimacy and Sexuality Questionnaire.

**Results:** 100% of the studied patients presented hidden symptoms. The most frequent symptoms were: 92,16 % fatigue, 84,37%, bladder disturbances, 78,12% sexual dysfunctions, 65,62% depression and anxiety, 62,5% pain, 43,75% symptomatic orthostatic hypotension, 43,75% insomnia, 25% daily sleepiness. Only 43,75% of them discussed with the neurologist about these symptoms and only 31,25% received specific treatment.

**Conclusions:** Hidden symptoms are frequent and disabling. Psychiatric symptoms affect QoL severely (9,3% of cases), highly (20,48%), moderately (50%) as well as the physical symptoms highly (31,25%), moderately (50%). Patients must be educated to recognize and encouraged to describe the hidden symptoms and the neurologists should take more time to ask the patients and to use specific scales in order to diagnose and treat their hidden symptoms and improve patient's QoL.

