

There's No End in Sight: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Quality of Life in Burning Syndrome Sufferers

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Abstract : Introduction: Although, in relation to Burning Mouth Syndrome (BMS), much energy has been expended on its definition and etiology, it still remains a contentious issue. There is agreement on the symptoms, but on little else; and approaches to treatment vary widely. However, it has been established that the condition has a detrimental effect on the sufferer's quality of life. Much research focus has been put on the physical impact of the syndrome. Recently, some literature has turned the focus to social, functional, and psychological factors. However, there is very little qualitative research on how burning mouth syndrome affects the lives of sufferer's and the present study seeks to remedy this. Method: The study recruited five male participants who took part in semi-structured interviews lasting between 30 and 50 minutes. Data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Results: The study identified four super-ordinate themes: Lack of Control due to Uncertainty about Condition; Disruption to Internal Sense of Self; Negative Future Expectation due to Chronic Symptoms; and Sense of BMS as an Intrusive Force. Aspects of these themes reflect areas of reduction in quality of life. Conclusion: BMS damages an individual's quality of life in ways that have not been reflected in self-report surveys of health-related quality of life. The condition has serious implications for the individual's sense of self, identity, and future. The study recommends that further qualitative research be carried out in this area. Also, the use of therapeutic interventions with sufferers from BMS is recommended, which would help not only sufferers but best practice in relation to their treatment.

Keywords : burning mouth syndrome, interpretative phenomenological analysis, qualitative research, quality of life

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