

Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Psychosocial Consequences of Sickle Cell Disease: The Case of Patients in a Public Hospital in Ghana

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Abstract : Background: Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is of major public-health concern globally, with majority of patients living in Africa. Despite its relevance, there is a dearth of research to determine the socio-demographic distribution and psychosocial impact of SCD in Africa. The objective of this study therefore was to examine the socio-demographic distribution and psychosocial consequences of SCD among patients in Ghana and to assess their quality of life and coping mechanisms. Methods: A cross-sectional research design was used, involving the completion of questionnaires on socio-demographic characteristics, quality of life of individuals, anxiety and depression. Participants were 387 male and female patients attending a sickle cell clinic in a public hospital. Results: Results showed no gender and marital status differences in anxiety and depression. However, there were age and level of education variances in depression but not in anxiety. In terms of quality of life, patients were more satisfied by the presence of love, friends, relatives as well as home, community and neighbourhood environment. While pains of varied nature and severity were the major reasons for attending hospital in SCD condition, going to the hospital as well as having Faith in God was the frequently reported mechanisms for coping with an unbearable SCD attacks. Multiple regression analysis showed that some socio-demographic and quality of life indicators had strong associations with anxiety and/or depression. Conclusion: It is recommended that a multi-dimensional intervention strategy incorporating psychosocial dimensions should be considered in the treatment and management of SCD.

Keywords : anxiety, depression, sickle cell disease, socio-demographic quality of life, characteristics, Ghana

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