

Vision-related quality of life and mental health outcomes of children and young people with visual impairment and their carers

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Objectives

To investigate the associations between vision-related quality of life (VQoL) and mental health outcomes of children and young people with visual impairment (CYP-VI) and their parents/carers, as a first step towards development of family-centred intervention.

Methods

Cross-sectional study included 68 CYP-VI aged 8-18 years (visual acuity of logMAR 0.50 or worse, comprising moderate and severe visual impairment and blindness in ICD-11) and their carers. Families were recruited through two paediatric ophthalmology departments and relevant vision loss charities in the United Kingdom. Children's outcomes included the overall scores on Vision-Related Quality of Life Questionnaire for Children and Young People (VQoL_CYP) as reported by the CYP-VI themselves, and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) as reported by their carers. Carers' outcomes were overall scores on Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), General Anxiety Disorder Assessment (GAD-7), and Parental Stress Scale (PSS). Associations between children's and carers' outcomes were analysed using Spearman's correlation coefficient.

Results

Lower VQoL was associated with more overall behavioural and emotional difficulties on SDQ ($r=-0.485$, $p<0.001$), lower carer's satisfaction with life ($r=0.395$, $p=0.002$), worse carer's depression ($r=-0.390$, $p=0.002$) and anxiety symptoms ($r=-0.315$, $p=0.015$). VQoL was not significantly associated with parental stress levels ($r=-0.196$, $p=0.140$). More overall child's behavioural and emotional difficulties significantly correlated with higher parental stress ($r=0.363$, $p=0.004$), worse carer's depression ($r=0.436$, $p<0.001$) and anxiety symptoms ($r=0.422$, $p<0.001$), but not with their satisfaction with life ($r=-0.159$, $p=0.224$). Visual acuity and gender were not related with any of the measured outcomes. Older age was associated with lower VQoL ($r=-0.320$, $p=0.010$).

Conclusions

Our findings show moderate correlations between mental health of CYP-VI and their carers, and indicate both should be considered when assessing VQoL outcomes of CYP-VI. Interventions targeting mental health of these families may promote better VQoL of CYP-VI.