

Quality of Life for Hospice Caregivers

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Introduction

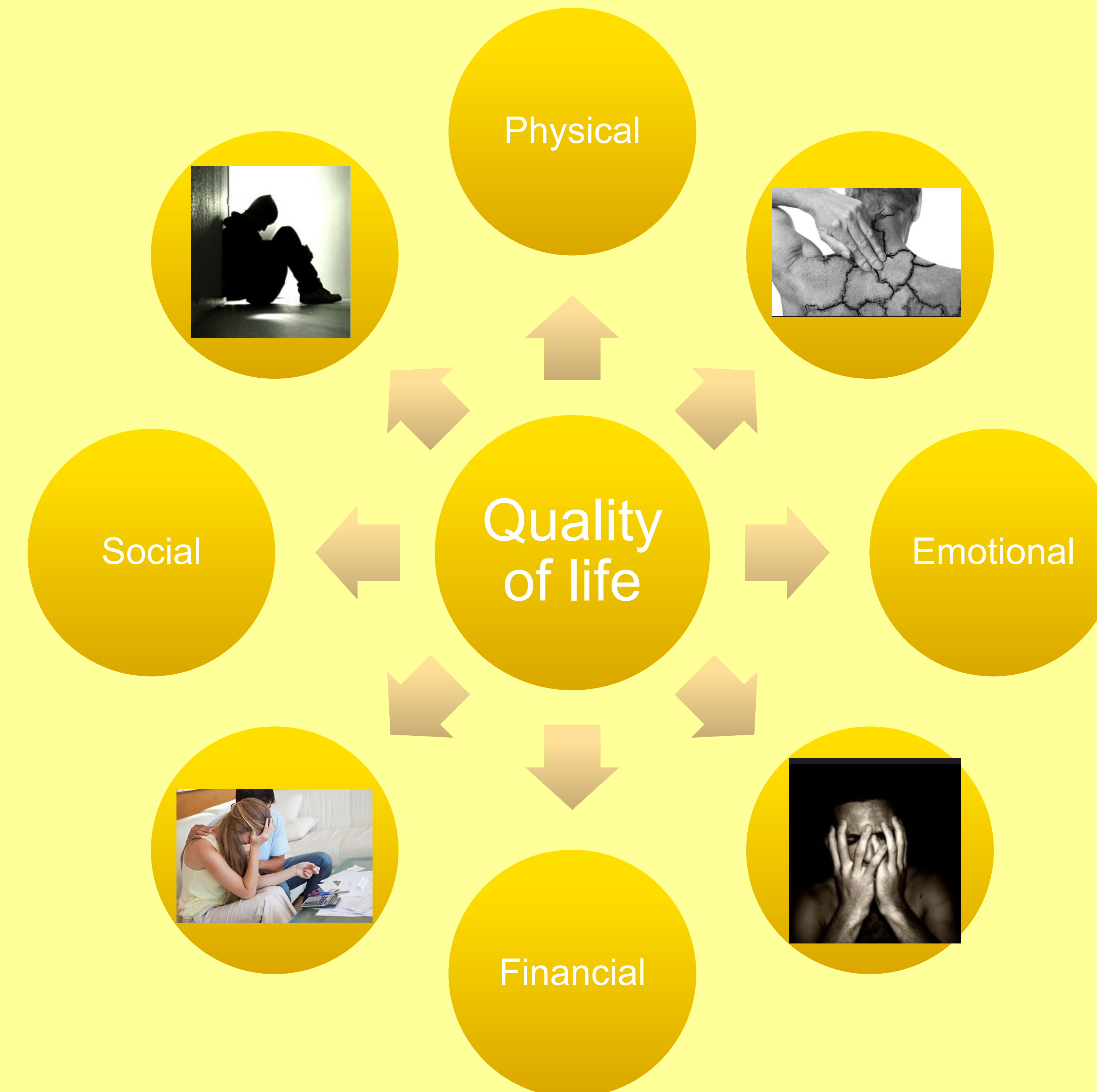
The goal of hospice care is to enhance the quality of life (QOL) of patients and their families during the final stages of illness, the dying process, and the bereavement period. This goal involves using an interdisciplinary approach to attend to patients and families as a "unit of care" and to address the spiritual, physical, emotional, financial, and psychological aspects of living with a terminal illness¹. Despite efforts, research shows a decrease in the overall quality of life of hospice caregivers after the first 30 days of hospice care², especially in four quality of life domains: physical, financial, emotional, and social domains.

The Caregiver Quality of Life Index was developed by McMillan and Mahon in 1994³. It was revised for use as an interview instrument by Courtney et. al. The Caregiver Quality of Life Index-Revised (CQLI-R) consists of self reported quality of life in four domains including physical, financial, emotional, and social domains⁴. Each item is scaled from 0-10; a higher score indicates greater quality of life of the caregiver in the rated domain. This instrument has been shown to have strong reliability and is recommend for its brevity, reliability and validity⁵. The Assessing Caregiving for Team Intervention is a new paradigm to further explore the relationship between quality of life and intervention. ACT involves the ongoing assessment of the caregivers' background as well as primary, secondary, and intrapsychic stressors which impact the outcome of the caregiving experience⁶.

The purpose of this study was to examine the following questions: 1) How does the QOL of hospice caregivers change over time? 2) How does a defined intervention affect their QOL? 3) How do different interventions affect the usual trajectory of QOL? 4) How do various aspects of QOL change over time? This poster addresses the first research question.

Methods

A researcher conducted a secondary analysis of a geographically diverse randomized controlled trial. Caregivers were asked to rate their quality of life using the Caregiver Quality of Life Index-Revised (CQLI-R) instrument at baseline and every two weeks for 120 days. The first and the last measurement was used for this analysis. The mean score was compared to the mean difference and the differences were tested for significance.



Results

Table 1: The final sample included 206 participants. These participants were predominantly female (82.5%). Their demographic variables are summarized in this table.

Table 2: Summarizes the mean scores, mean difference, and test of significant for the CQLI-R. All but financial subscale dropped significantly during the hospice stay. Financial quality of life had the lowest baseline value; however, the subscore remained stable throughout the hospice experience. Social subscale followed by emotional subscore had the most significant difference.

Conclusions

- The quality of life for hospice caregivers fell significantly in emotional, social, and physical domains. In addition, overall quality of life declined.
- The social subscale had the most significant drop. This is consistent with recent findings that explored the trajectory of social support in hospice caregivers.
- Regular assessment of the quality of life of caregivers can help hospice staff develop customized plans to improve this metric overall.

References

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Table 1. Demographics of Usual Care Group from QOL study

Caregiver Characteristics	N	%
Caregiver gender		
Male	36	(17.5)
Female	170	(82.5)
Caregiver race		
Other	4	(1.9)
Black/AA	11	(5.3)
White/Caucasian	191	(92.7)
Caregiver Employment		
Unknown	2	(1.0)
Unemployment	84	(40.8)
Employed	75	(36.8)
Others	45	(21.8)
Caregiver relationship with patient		
Unknown	1	(0.5)
Spouse/partner	47	(22.8)
Adult child	113	(54.9)
Others	45	(21.8)

Table 2. Quality of Life Scores

CQLI-R	N	Baseline M(SD)	Last M (SD)	M(SD)	p-value
Emotional	206	7.35 (2.15)	6.84 (2.13)	.51	.001*
Social	206	7.32(2.46)	6.55(2.55)	.77	<.0001*
Financial	206	6.53 (2.91)	6.53 (2.55)	-	.97
Physical	206	7.01(2.11)	6.58 (2.16)	.42	<.01*
Total	206	28.21 (7.36)	26.55 (7.48)	1.67	<.001*