

195.00

THE NEED FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL AND OTHER MEDICAL THAN CARDIAC SUPPORT OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND BOYS WITH CHRONIC CARDIAC DISEASE

K. Makkonen, E. Jokinen, M. Siimes

Departments of Adolescent Medicine and Cardiology, HUCS Hospital for Children and Adolescents, Helsinki, Finland

BACKGROUND: Adolescents growing up with any chronic disease face several developmental challenges and approximately one fifth of them have psychiatric comorbidity. Therefore, a developmental approach in the treatment of paediatric patients has been suggested.

The overall aim of the study is to evaluate the somatic and psychosocial development of adolescents with chronic cardiac disease. Here, findings regarding the need for psychological support and other than cardiac medical support are presented.

METHOD AND SUBJECTS: During the time period November 2000 – December 2002 sixty-six 13- or 15- year- old cardiac patients were invited for a semi-structured interview and somatic examination performed by a nurse at the adolescent out-patient clinic. The parents were invited to meet a social worker or a psychologist. Prior to the visit, the adolescent and his/her parents were asked to fulfil a semi-structured questionnaire evaluating the patient's psychosocial development. Participation rate was 77% (N=51).

RESULTS: Twenty-one of the 51 subjects were suggested further – i.e. other than cardiac - care. A psychologist or a psychiatrist was visited by 19 adolescents, and an adolescent medicine specialist by two. Parents of the patients found the opportunity to discuss their experiences about their child's disease and growth most important.

CONCLUSIONS: Adolescents with chronic cardiac disease often present with psychological symptoms. Also, they might worry about normality of their somatic growth. A routinely, preventive screening for symptoms and problems among all adolescent cardiac patients seems to be beneficial. However, further analyses about the long-term effects of such a screening are needed.

