Evaluation of the Quality of Life after Surgical Treatment of Chronic Pancreatitis

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ABSTRACT

Objective Pain is the main symptom of chronic pancreatitis. However, in addition to an improvement of pain symptoms, an increase in the quality of life also influences the therapeutic success. The present paper evaluates the influence of surgery for chronic pancreatitis on early and late postoperative quality of life. Methods From March 2000 until April 2005, 51 patients underwent surgical treatment for chronic pancreatitis at our institution. Thirty-nine (76.5%) patients were operated according to the Frey procedure, and in 12 (23.5%) patients the Whipple procedure was performed. Patient data were documented prospectively. Postoperative follow-ups concerning postoperative pain scores and quality of life were carried out retrospectively using a standardized questionnaire. Results During the median follow-up period of 50 months, an improvement in the pain scores was observed in 93% of the patients of the Frey group and in 67% of the Whipple group. The indices for global quality of life and for the physical and emotional status increased in both surgical groups. Conclusion For patients with chronic pancreatitis, the decisive factor is the quality of life, particularly concerning pain and metabolic changes. The Frey procedure seems to offer advantages with respect to long-term freedom of pain and low risk of surgery-induced pancreatic insufficiency.