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Exercise capacity and self reported functional status in patients with complex congenital heart disease.

Balint O.H. (1), Majer K. (1), Kovats A.(2), Csepregi A.(1), Andréka P.(1), Szatmári A.(1), Karlócai K. (1), Temesvári A.(1)
(1) Hungarian Institute of Cardiology, Budapest, Hungary (2) Szent Rokus Kórház, Budapest, Hungary

Objectives: To compare self reported quality of life with measured exercise capacity in patients with complex congenital heart disease. Methods: Forty-eight patients (20 female, age 18-55years old) with various congenital heart defects (19 TOF/DORV, 16 TGA, 6 Fontan, 2 PAH, and 5 others) in NYHA I or II functional class completed an SF36-health related quality of life questionnaire and performed a six-minute walk test (6MWD), followed by a cardiopulmonary exercise test (predicted MVO2). Results: Majority of patients in NYHA class I achieved a 6MWD of 450m (97%) and reported a physical functioning score and a mean QOL index above average (88% and 87%, respectively), however only 38% of them had an MVO2 >70% predicted. Patients with NYHA class II were less likely to have an MVO2 >70% predicted (7%), but 43% of them achieved a 6MWD of 450m and more than half of them reported a physical functioning score and mean QOL index above average (71% and 58%, respectively). Self reported physical functioning score and average QOL index correlates significantly with 6MWD ($r= 0,501$; $p<0,001$ and $r=0,602$; $p<0,001$, respectively), but not with predicted MVO2. Conclusion: Patients with complex congenital heart disease tend to overestimate their functional status in spite of a decreased exercise capacity. The most objective measurement of a decrease in exercise capacity seems to be the predicted peak oxygen uptake.