

## PW2-5

### **Social and health related coping strategies of parents of children with operated congenital heart disease**

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Giving a birth of a child with congenital heart diseases (CHD) profoundly affects the whole family system. Parents have to learn how to live in a different situation and to adapt their life style to the new conditions.

The aim of the research is to study the specific active or passive types of social and health related coping strategies, which parents of CHD operated children use.

Methods: A special four area (health related, social, family and psychological) questionnaire was developed. The health related sphere includes medical information sources; knowledge about the disease, its treatment and follow up; changes in the family life, after having a "cardiac" child. The social sphere involves: changes in friendship circle; upbringing of the child; and changes in the parental employment status. Active coping is related with a direct and rational approach, whereas passive coping involves avoidance, withdrawal and wishful thinking.

Target group consists of 109 parents of 68 children with at least one open-heart operation, aged 3 to 14 years, 33 with "simple" and 35 with "complex" CHD. The analysis was made on the basis of the demographic data.

#### Results

The health related area analysis revealed that parents from the capital and cities significantly more often use active coping strategies compared to the parents from towns and villages: more than one source for information ( $p=0.003$ ); change in attitude to the child ( $p=0.05$ ).

Parents of the children with "simple" CHD more often use passive coping strategies. There is a tendency for a change in the strategy type from active to passive during the progress of the disease and duration of the follow up.

The social sphere analysis demonstrates that most of the parents use active strategies: change in the friendship circle (60%) and no change in the employment status (76.1%). The way of upbringing a CHD child depends mainly on the disease severity and the parental residency.

#### Conclusions

The parents of CHD children need special support, training and education for acquiring new and different skills for coping with the stress, caused by child's disease. Those needs are higher among parents from villages and towns.