

Lifestyles and determinants of perceived health status in Grown-up congenital heart (GUCH) diseases – Results from a national survey in Italy

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Introduction

The rate of grown-up patients with congenital heart disease (GUCH) has been growing steadily among the population, supported by the innovation in both cardiac surgery and medical treatments. GUCH peculiar clinical problems require tailored treatments and care, but a number of analysis about their modifiable risk factors, such as the lifestyles.

However, the information on the epidemiological and clinical aspects of GUCH are poorly described and contradictory. Especially, the lifestyles and determinants of perceived health status among GUCH remains low described worldwide, despite their possible influence on the overall adherence to the follow-up and consequently clinical outcomes. Accordingly, this study aim to provide the first Italian epidemiological description of the GUCH population lifestyles, identifying the determinants of a poor perceived health status.

Methods

A cross-sectional survey was conducted in an Italian GUCH centre and supported by the Italian Association of GUCH (AICCA). An online survey collected the main socio-demographic and clinical characteristics of the enrolled GUCH, their lifestyles and the perceived health status. The Ethics Committee of our centre approved the study (36/INT/2015).

Results

A sample of 626 GUCH was enrolled (53.9% female; mean age: 35.69±13.49 years; mean BMI: 23.18±4.07 kg/m²). Considering the lifestyles, 65 patients consume tobacco (10.4%), and 81 patients (12.9%) occasionally consume drugs. Roughly, half of the patients (52.1%) perform regular physical activities. The sample reported an adequate received sex education (76.1%) and 40.5% of them use contraceptive methods. Roughly, one patient out every five (18.1%) declared to be low adherent to the ongoing medical treatment. Overall, 53.6% (n=337) and 63.8% (n=401) of the sample have an adequate scores of physical and mental health, respectively. The odds of inadequate perception of physical health increased by more than two times in patients under antiarrhythmic therapies, more than 1.5 times in patients under anticoagulants, and approximately 1.7 times in patients treated with antiplatelets. The odds of inadequate perception of mental health increased by 1.7 time for every year of aging.

Conclusion

This is the first description of the GUCH's lifestyles, underlining illicit use of drugs and some psychological needs of these patients. Further research is necessary.