

Cross-sectional and longitudinal associations between self-reported financial hardship, quality of life and depressive symptoms in older Icelandic adults discharged from hospital

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Abstract

Several studies have shown that financial hardship can affect psychological health. However, little is known on older adults discharged from hospital. The aim of this study was to investigate cross-sectional and longitudinal associations between financial hardship, quality of life and depressive symptoms in older Icelandic adults. This secondary analysis is based on data from the HOMEFOOD dietary intervention trial which investigated 104 older adults (mean age=83 years) discharged from hospital. Depressive symptoms were measured using the Iowa variant of the Centre-for-Epidemiologic-Studies Depression scale (CES-D), health related quality of life (QoL) was assessed using the EuroQol Group's EQ-5D instrument (EQ-5D). Financial hardship and income category were self-reported. Financial hardship was reported by 23 (22%) of the participants and was related to lower income categories ($P = 0.005$) but not to gender ($P = 0.495$). Financial hardship at discharge was associated cross-sectionally with higher CES-D scores ($B=2.3$, $P=0.029$, corrected for age and gender), but not with EQ-5D ($B=-0.05$, $P=0.195$). The longitudinal analysis showed that financial hardship predicted both poorer EQ-5D ($B=-0.1$, $P=0.016$) and higher CES-D score ($B=2.2$, $P=0.014$) six months after hospital discharge (corrected for age, gender, intervention and corresponding baseline values). In the vulnerable group of older adults discharged from hospital, financial hardship is frequently reported in Iceland. Further, financial hardship is negatively related to QoL and positively related to depressive symptoms after hospital discharge.

Keywords: Centre-for-Epidemiologic-Studies Depression scale, EuroQol Group's EQ-5D instrument, gender, HOMEFOOD study, income