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Title: Subtle assessment of quality of life in PH patients on inhaled iloprost treatment

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Body: Background - Pulmonary hypertension (PH) is a disease characterized by vasoconstriction, remodeling of the small pulmonary vessels, and a lack of endogenous prostacyclin. Prostacyclin and its analogues are potent vasodilators and widely used in PH treatment. Information on the quality of life of PH patients is limited. Methods - 74 patients who suffer from different forms of PH and receive inhaled Iloprost, either as first line or as add-on therapy, are followed. Patients received questionnaires concerning multiple aspects of their quality of life. NYHA functional class (NYHA), 6-minute-walk-distance (6MWD), results of the right-heart catheterization, and biomarker levels were recorded at the moment of baseline and follow-up (Nov. 2007 - Feb. 2009). Results - 76% of patients described an improved state of health compared with the situation before start of inhalation. Furthermore significant correlations between quality of life and other important measures of PH could be shown. Improvements of NYHA-class, 6MWD, laboratory values (uric acid, BNP) and also of hemodynamic measurements (i.e. mPAP, PVR, CO, CI) during inhalative therapy with iloprost were detected. 6MWD improved significantly from 314.2±128.8 m to 354.4±131.0 m (p<0.001). 11 patients (23%) could improve their NYHA-class, 32 (66.6%) stayed unchanged and 5 (10.4%) deteriorated. These differences between baseline and follow up are significant (p<0.001). Conclusion - Quality of life is an important measure for PH patients. Improvement in quality of life correlated very well with other important measures of PH.