

An application of Structural Equation Modeling to test social support and physical symptoms as predictors of Quality of Life and Subjective Well-being in persons with chronic disease

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to test a hypothetical model to examine whether social support and physical symptoms are relevant predictors of Quality of Life (QoL) domains (general, physical and mental well-being) and Subjective Well-being (SWB), in Portuguese patients with chronic diseases. Structural Equation Models (SEM) were used to test the quality of the hypothesized model, estimating the simultaneous effects of predictors on the outcome variables. A sample of 572 patients was recruited from central hospitals in various districts of Portugal. All completed self-reported questionnaires assessing socio-demographic and clinical variables, social support (MOS Social Support Survey) and physical symptoms (Portuguese version of Psychosomatic Symptom Checklist). The hypothesized model fitted the data reasonably well. It was found that social support had an independent positive impact on both QoL and SWB, after controlling for physical symptoms, whereas physical symptoms had a negative impact on the QoL and SWB. These findings suggest that, the greater the social support patients perceive the more facilitated will be their adjustment, which in turn will affect their quality of life.

Keywords

Chronic disease, Quality of life, Structural equation modeling.