

SELF-CONCEPT AMONG THALASSEMIA PATIENTS AGES 13-18 YEARS OLD IN A TERTIARY HOSPITAL IN DAVAO CITY: A PILOT STUDY

Krystle Valencia Rustia, Davao Doctors Hospital, Davao City, Philippines

Background: Improvement in medical management of thalassemic patients have substantially lead to increased life expectancy. Thalassemia's chronic nature and its lifelong treatment result in psychosocial problems, including changes in self-concept. This study aims to examine whether or not self-concept among adolescent thalassemic patients is impaired.

Objective: To assess the self-concept of children with thalassemia ages 13-18years old in a tertiary hospital in Davao City.

Design: Descriptive cross-sectional design.

Setting: Six-month study conducted at a private tertiary hospital in Davao City.

Participants: Ten thalassemic patients 13 to 18 years old whose diagnosis was confirmed by a pediatric hematologist through clinical and/or laboratory parameters. Children with comorbidities unrelated to thalassemia were excluded.

Main outcome measure: Self-concept scores were interpreted using Pasao's Self-Concept Scale. The relationship of socio-demographic and clinical profile to the self-concept score was determined using Fisher's exact test and Spearman's Rank Order Correlation test.

Results: Overall, the respondents had high self-concept scores. Among the ten dimensions of Pasao's Self-Concept, they rated positive in *Not Me, Goal Directedness, Accepting Attitudes, Family Relations, Peer Relations, Identity Factor, Self Feeling, Self Worth, and Self-Confidence*. They scored negative in *Emotionality*.

No significant association (*exact sig.* >0.05) was found between diagnosis, sex, transfusion frequency, splenectomy, hemoglobin level, complications, and presence of thalassemia among the respondent's relatives and their level of self-concept. Similarly, there is no significant relationship, at 95% confidence level, between the patient's age ($r_s=0.095$, $p=0.794$), birth order ($r_s=-.605$, $p=0.064$), iron chelation therapy ($r_s=-.365$, $p=0.299$), serum ferritin levels ($r_s=0.598$, $p=0.068$) and parental education level ($r_s=0.046$, $p=0.900$).

Conclusions: Thalassemic patients included in the study have high self-concept. None of the socio-demographic and clinical profile yielded significant relationship with their self-concept. Larger sample size and a multi-site study is recommended to include patients from all economic status which might also affect their self-concept.

Keywords: *thalassemia, self-concept*