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Changes in depression, health anxiety and pain catastrophizing between enrollment and 1 month after a radius fracture

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Abstract

Objectives To test the difference in symptoms of (1) depression, (2) health anxiety, and (3) catastrophic thinking between one and six weeks after injury to the radius.

Patients and Methods Sixty-nine adult patients with a minimally displaced radial head or distal radius fracture were prospectively enrolled. After diagnosis we recorded demographic variables, 11-point ordinal numerical pain score and agreement with “no pain, no gain,” Disability of the Arms, Shoulder, and Hand (DASH) questionnaire, Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression (CESD) Scale, the Whiteley Index, and the Pain Catastrophizing Scale (PCS). Fifty-five patients (80%) returned after 1 month to reevaluate pain, DASH, CESD, Whiteley Index, and PCS scores.

Results CESD scores decreased by an average of 5 ± 9 points ($P<0.001$) and Pain Catastrophizing Scale scores decreased by 2 ± 6 points ($P=0.0041$). In multivariable analysis, decrease in CESD was associated with not having an additional pain condition, more days elapsed between injury and final evaluation, and stronger agreement with “no pain, no gain” (adjusted R^2 0.26, $P = 0.0006$). An increase in Whiteley scores was associated with fewer years of education ($R = -0.34$; $P= 0.012$). Changes in PCS scores were associated with marital status (single -1.7 ± 4.3 vs. married -4.6 ± 6.0 vs. separated 0.55 ± 6.2 , $P=0.040$).

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