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Health-related Quality of Life of Parents of Children with Feeding Disorders in Sri Lanka

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Introduction: Parents of children with Feeding Disorders (FD) have to be much stronger in their lives with keeping good Health Related Quality of Life (HRQoL), as they are primary caregivers of children.

Objective: The aim of the study is to examine the impact of children's feeding disorders on their parents' health-related quality of life (HRQOL) in Sri Lanka.

Results: Demographic, economic, and feeding history were obtained from 246 parents of children with feeding disorders between the ages of 6 months and 7 years, who are receiving feeding therapy at a community multidisciplinary care centre. Participants completed standard adapted assessments on identifying the severity of FD (Pedi-EAT) and the impact of it on their HRQoL FS-IS). A statistical analysis was performed on FS-IS and demographic, socio economic, and dysphagic data using SPSS (26.0). The results indicated that caring for children with feeding/swallowing issues negatively affected the caregivers' health-related quality of life (HRQoL). Independent sample t-test revealed that mothers of children with FD have significantly lower HRQoL compared to fathers ($t(246) = -.947, p = .001$). HRQoL of parents significantly decreased when the severity of feeding disorders of their children was higher. Similarly, long-term FD in children showed significantly higher worry among parents and restrictions to their daily activities, reducing their HRQoL.

Conclusion: The findings of the study expand our understanding on the impact of paediatric feeding disorders on the parents and families, which is a critical element determining the effectiveness of healthcare intervention for children with FD and their prognosis. Clinicians need to pay attention to factors that could improve HRQoL of parents of children with FD, in order to offer more effective care.