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PIBIC Last Name - Caires Bestilleiro First Name - Márcia Middle -
Lopes

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ASSESSING VISION-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE IN CHILDREN WITH BILATERAL CONGENITAL CATARACT

Marcia Caires Bestilleiro Lopes¹; Adriana Berezovsky²; Marcia
Beatriz Tartarella²; Solange Rios Salomão² ¹Graduate Student,
Visual Sciences Program, Dept. of Ophthalmology, UNIFESP; ²
Professor, Dept of Ophthalmology, UNIFESP

PURPOSE:To assess vision-related quality of life in children with bilateral congenital cataracts, using the recently developed Children's Visual Function Questionnaire (CVFQ). **METHODS:**CVFQ has two presentations, one for children under 3 years of age and the other for older children, and is divided in six subscales – general health; general vision; competence; personality; family impact and treatment. From those, a composite score can also be calculated. The CVFQ was applied in the hospital setting to parents or other caretakers by personal interview. The subscale scores were compared for control group (n=32 - normal vision) versus congenital cataract group (n=16 - no visual impairment, n=9 - mild visual impairment and n=11 - severe visual impairment). For analysis, t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were performed. **RESULTS:**All subscales presented low scores for the quality of life of children with bilateral congenital cataracts. Congenital bilateral cataract scores were higher than those of the control group for all subscales. In the bilateral congenital cataract cohort competence subscale was significantly lower in the severe visually impaired compared to those not visually impaired (ANOVA F 5.1, p=0.01; Tukey test p<0.01) with composite subscale significantly lower in the severe visually impaired patients compared to those mild and not visually impaired (ANOVA F 5.4, p=0.01; Tukey test p=0.01/0.05). **CONCLUSIONS:**Bilateral congenital cataracts influence vision-related quality of life of children as confirmed by low scores in all competences assessed by the CVFQ. This instrument should be incorporated in the clinical assessment of children with bilateral cataracts as a measure of the impact of visual impairment in their quality of life.