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SENSE OF COHERENCE AS A PREDICTOR OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN ADOLESCENTS WITH CONGENITAL HEART DEFECTS: A REGISTER-BASED 1-YEAR FOLLOW-UP STUDY

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Objective: Sense of coherence (SOC) is a resource for health and quality of life (QoL) in adults. Aim of this investigation was to evaluate the association of SOC and QoL in adolescents with congenital heart defects (CHD).

Method: Observational study among 770 adolescents aged 14 - 17 years from a national CHD register. SOC was measured at baseline with the SOC-L9 questionnaire. At baseline and at 12-months follow-up, QoL was measured with the KINDL-R questionnaire, evaluating overall well-being and six subscales. The association of SOC with QoL was evaluated in multi-level linear models separately for overall well-being and KINDL-R subscales. Initial models comprised SOC as only fixed effect while the final models were adjusted for age, gender, medical and socioeconomic status and behavioral factors.

Results: Overall well-being, self-esteem and school-related well-being was significantly higher at follow-up compared with baseline. SOC at baseline (median 50 [range: 16 - 63] points) was positively associated with overall well-being and all KINDL-R subscales. There were significant negative interactions between SOC at baseline and time to follow-up for overall well-being and all KINDL-R subscales except psychological well-being. But even in fully adjusted models associations of SOC at baseline with overall well-being and all KINDL-R subscales at follow-up remained significant.

Conclusion: SOC is an independent predictor of QoL in adolescents with CHD. Except for psychological well-being, this effect attenuates over one year but remains positive in overall QoL and sub-dimensions. Further studies should evaluate whether interventions aimed to increase SOC in children with CHD improve QoL.