



QOL - Quality of life and Neurosurgery: By Dr. Shailesh Kelkar

Mankind has been evolving over centuries which can be asserted from various facts and archaeological remnants of various civilization. In the process only one driving force has been working during this evolution and that is to have betterment of physical, mental, psychological and social wellbeing of human beings. The concept of quality of life has evolved which compares the cities in the world and rates them on the basis of certain indicators as per level of satisfaction of the inhabitants have from the surroundings in the city.

Off late the concept of Quality of life has been applied to the medical care offered which suggests the patients ability to enjoy life activities, consisting of 16 items understood as broad range of human experiences related to overall well being and satisfaction. For the common man what does this QOL mean : the three components it includes-the treating doctor, the patient and the facts about the modalities of particular specialities. The interaction of this gives rise to overall establishment of quality of life.

Neurosurgery has evolved from a broad sub speciality to refined branch of micro-neurosurgery with advancement in investigative modalities, surgical skills with better outcome. There are number of scaling systems to quantify the outcome of a particular surgical treatment: glasgow coma scale , barthel's index for stroke, Nurricks index for spasticity etc.

It is mandatory on part of surgeon to discuss with patient regarding the disease process, surgical procedure offered, the risk involved in the outcome, the benefits expected. On the other hand the patients relative make an attempt to understand these factors and make a decision to undergo surgical procedure. Every procedure in neurosurgery from trauma to tumor surgery of brain and spinal fracture to slip disc surgery involving spine will have to undergo same sort of prepositions. In Neurological practice, a case of brain tumor presents with all these issues. On one hand the neurosurgeon tries to anticipate the risk of Neurological weakness post-surgery and on the other hand would thrive to acheive maximum excision of lesion and improve the outcome scores, From perspective of patient and relatives, it may not necessarily satisfy them on the overall outcome, may not improve his QOL and overall wellbeing. This leads to certain levels of dissatisfaction, making life of treating doctor and patient uncomfortable. In this scenerio the prediction of QOL outcome after a particular surgical procedure becomes more significant and pertinent as compared to the improvement in scale. Hence the medical fraternity and the society will have to undergo this conceptual change and adopt QOL concept to prognosticate the outcome.

This could be guiding principle of future medical practice in General and Neurosurgery in particular. QOL concept will improve decision making thereby reducing financial burden of the society and will also improve doctor-patient relationship in near future and make approach to life more realistic.