

## Publication

# Posttraumatic stress disorder predicts poor health-related quality of life in cardiac patients in Palestine

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**BACKGROUND:** The longitudinal association of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with health-related quality of life (HRQL) in cardiac patients' remains poorly studied, particularly in conflict-affected settings. **MATERIALS AND METHODS:** For this cohort study, we used baseline and one-year follow-up data collected from patients 30 to 80 years old consecutively admitted with a cardiac diagnosis to four major hospitals in Nablus, Palestine. All subjects were screened for PTSD and HRQL using the PTSD Checklist Specific and the HeartQoL questionnaire. We used a generalized structural equation model (GSEM) to examine the independent predictive association of PTSD at baseline with HRQL at follow-up. We also examined the mediating roles of depression, anxiety, and stress at baseline. **RESULTS:** The prevalence of moderate-to-high PTSD symptoms among 1022 patients at baseline was 270%. Patients with PTSD symptoms reported an approximate 200% lower HRQL at follow-up. The PTSD and HRQL relationship was largely mediated by depressive and anxiety symptoms. It was not materially altered by adjustment for socio-demographic, clinical, and lifestyle factors. **DISCUSSION:** Our findings suggest that individuals with a combination of PTSD and depression, or anxiety are potentially faced with poor HRQL as a longer-term outcome of their cardiac disease. In Palestine, psychological disorders are often stigmatized; however, integration of mental health care with cardiac care may offer an entry door for addressing psychological problems in the population. Further studies need to assess the effective mental health interventions for improving quality of life in cardiac patients.

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