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Title: Health related quality of life in patients with rhinitis is low compared with the healthy population

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Body: Aim: To compare health related quality of life in rhinitis patients with the normal population, and to identify predictors of health related quality of life in rhinitis patients. Methods: A total of 696 patients with rhinitis, 14-44 years of age, were interviewed about upper and lower respiratory symptoms, and skin test reactivity, lung function, and airway responsiveness were measured. The SF-36 scoring instrument assessed health related quality of life according to eight domains. Mental and physical component summaries (MCS and PCS) were computed. Results: SF-36 scores among rhinitis patients were lower than in the reference population for all domains, particularly MCS. Low MCS among rhinitis patients were predicted by: male sex ($p=0.001$), smoking ($p=0.029$), eczema ($p=0.007$), food allergy ($p=0.007$) and nasal stenosis ($p=0.006$), whereas low PCS was predicted by: male sex ($p=0.006$), asthma ($p=0.001$), recurring sinusitis ($p=0.001$), airway hyperresponsiveness ($p=0.001$) and nasal stenosis ($p=0.003$). There was a linear decrease in MCS ($p=0.001$) and PCS ($p=0.001$) according to increasing severity of asthma (measured by GINA score) among rhinitis patients. Conclusion: Patients with rhinitis have a poor health related quality of life compared with the healthy general population. Male sex, smoking, asthma (severity), nasal stenosis, eczema, food allergy and airway hyperresponsiveness determine health related quality of life in rhinitis patients.