SUMMARY

Background

Low back pain is a major musculoskeletal problem in the society, producing significant restrictions on daily activities, hence decrease in overall quality of life. Low back pain has considerable negative impact on the quality of life of affected persons and on their families. This study was aimed to assess the impact of low back pain on health-related quality of life among adult patients attending the General Outpatient Clinic of the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Nigeria.

Methods

A cross-sectional study of four hundred (400) adults aged eighteen years and above, attending the General Outpatient Clinic of the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo was carried out from May to July 2011. The subjects were administered questionnaires (semi-structured and WHOQOL-Bref) which sought information on socio-demographic characteristics, presence or absence of low back pain and risk factors for low back pain as well as Health-related quality of life.

Results

The results were analyzed using Epi info statistical software version 3.2.2. The mean age of the subjects was 38.5±14.2 years. There were 176 males and 224 females in ratio 1:1.3 respectively. The overall prevalence of low back pain was 31.0%. Statistically significant risk factors were age
(X²= 103.3, p<0.0001), marital status (X²= 25.72, p<0.0001), educational level (X²= 13.82, p=0.0002), place of residence (X²=6.04, p=0.01), alcohol intake (X²= 11.96, p=0.0005), cigarette smoking (X²= 10.02, p=0.0015), body mass index (X²= 120.29, p<0.0001), lifting activity (X²= 27.52, p=0.0001) and stressful job (X² = 29.57, p<0.0001). However, gender (X²=1.96, p=0.16), low job satisfaction (X²= 1.22, p=0.26) and prolonged sitting or bending (X²= 0.28, p=0.50) were not statistically significant. With multiple logistic regression analysis of statistically significant risk factors, lifting activity (O.R =3.16; 95% CI = 2.04 - 4.96; p<0.0001), body mass index (O.R = 2.13; 95% CI = 1.38 – 5.31; p<0.0001) and stressful job (O.R=3.61; 95% CI= 2.25- 5.89; p<0.0001 ) retained their statistical significance.

Subjects who had low back pain in this study showed significant impairment in the overall quality of life (X²= 153.60, p<0.0001), general health satisfaction (X²= 130.60, p<0.001), psychological (X²= 48.11, p<0.0001), social relationship (X²= 64.16, p<0.0001) and physical (X²= 81.67, p<0.001) domains of their health-related quality of life compared to subjects without low back pain. However, subjects who had low back pain in this study, did not show significant impairment in the environmental domain (X²= 0.12, p= 0.73) of health-related quality of life when compared with those without low back pain.

**Conclusion**

There was significant impairment in the quality of life of subjects with low back pain in this study. The prevalence of low back pain in this study was 31.0%. Risk factors for low back pain in this
study were Age, Marital status, Educational level, Place of residence, Alcohol intake, Cigarette smoking, Body mass index, Lifting activity, and Stressful job. With multiple logistic regression analysis independent risk factors for low back pain identified in this study were lifting activity, body mass index, and stressful job. Health education on proper lifting methods, lifestyle modification and the reduction of stress at work should be encouraged. Improvement in Health-related quality of life especially with regards to the psychological, social and physical indices will enhance positive quality of life in patients with low back pain.