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Effects of recurrent fasting on fatigue and quality of life in patients with multiple sclerosis

Z. Nasr, M. Etemadifar, F. Sayahi, N. Toghianifar,

Akbari, M.F. Esfahani

Background: Fasting is one of the recommended worships of several great religions in the world. During the Ramadan, circadian rhythm and pattern of eating changes results in physiological, biochemical and hormonal changes in the body. Many of Muslims with medical considerations ask their physicians about the feasibility and safety of fasting during Ramadan. We proposed this study to assess the effect of Ramadan fasting on the quality of life and fatigue in multiple sclerosis (MS) patients.

Patients and methods: Patients with definite diagnosis of relapsing-remitting MS according to McDonald's criteria and with mild disability (expanded disability status scale (EDSS) score ≥ 3) were included in this study. Fatigue and quality of life were assessed using the validated Persian versions of Modified Fatigue Impact Scale (MFIS) and Multiple Sclerosis Quality of Life-54 (MSQOL-54) questionnaires, respectively. **Results:** Eighteen patients were enrolled in our study. The mean total score of MSIF after fasting was 26.94716.65 versus 25.50713.81 before fasting ($P=0.58$). The mean physical health composite and mental health composite of quality of life increased significantly after fasting ($P=0.008$ and $P=0.003$ respectively).

Conclusion: Our results have shown that fasting during Ramadan can improve the quality of life in MS patients. Furthermore, no unfavorable effect was observed between fatigue before and after fasting. However, larger prospective clinical studies are needed to shed more light on our results.