Introduction:
The quality of life is generally compromised in patients undergoing long term treatment for a chronic condition. Poor quality of life can have a negative impact on the treatment outcome. In addition to their renal failure, quality of life of end-stage renal disease patients is further compromised by renal function replacement treatments such as haemodialysis (HD) and peritoneal dialysis (PD). These treatments have potential physical and psychosocial disadvantages, including the time consumed by treatment, the loss of regular employment, changes in family dynamics and the pain associated with treatment. Disagreement exists about differences between quality of life in HD and PD patients.

This study compared quality of life between HD and PD patients by means of the SF-36. The SF-36 is a short form questionnaire that is used to assess the individual’s quality of life in terms of two major components, namely physical and mental well being. These components are subdivided into eight subscale categories which involve questions based on the individual’s perception of his/her own health with regards to physical pain and emotional functioning.

Aim:
The objective of the study was to compare quality of life between HD and PD patients.

Methods:
Quality of life in 15 HD and 15 PD patients was compared using the SF-36 short form. All patients signed informed consent forms and the ethical clearance number was S168/2006.

Results:
There was no significant difference between HD and PD patients for the total SF-36 score, but HD subjects reported more pain (p<0.05).

Conclusions:
Quality of life is similar in HD and PD patients, with the exception of higher pain levels in HD patients.

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Table 1 Summary of the SF-36 domains and mean values according to the US general population survey

Table 2 Mean age and years of treatment for the two patient groups

Table 3 Comparison of SF-36 subscale scores between the two patient groups (p=0.05 for BP)

Table 4 Mean SF-36 scores and test statistics for the haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis patient groups

Table 5 Blood test results for the patient groups indicating similarity for the two treatment modalities. (* p<0.05 for Hb)