The Measurement of Quality of Life

Mick Power
University of Edinburgh
WHO Definition of Health

• Health is not only the absence of infirmity and disease but also a state of physical, mental and social well-being
Definition of QoL

• An individuals’ perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the persons’ physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment. (WHOQOL Group, 1995).
Bert Spilker’s hierarchical approach to QOL
Quality of Life: Measurement

• **WHOQOL**
  - **WHOQOL BREF** - 4 domains: physical health, psychological health, social relationships, environment
  - **WHOQOL 100** – 6 domains: physical, psychological, Independence, social relationships, environment & Spirituality
  - Cross-cultural generic instrument
WHOQOL – Developments

Older adults module (WHOQOL-OLD)

Child/Adolescent adaptations are now the KIDSCREEN/DISABKIDS projects

Illness-specific modules
  • E.G. HIV/aids,  cancer

Spirituality Module

Items for national population surveys
  (EUROHIS-QOL; WHOQOL-AGE)

Disabilities module and adaptation (intellectual and physical) (DISQOL)
WHOQOL METHODOLOGY:

- Subjective approach (objective QOL needs to be measured separately)

- Combination of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods
e.g. Focus Groups to Generate Items

- Combination of Classical and Modern Approaches to Psychometrics
e.g. Factor analysis plus Item Response Theory approaches

- Translation and Back-translation procedure into local language from English as the working language
The next question asks about your disability overall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does your disability have a negative effect on your day-to-day life?</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A Little</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Mostly</th>
<th>Totally</th>
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The following questions ask about how you have felt about certain things, how much certain things have applied to you, and how satisfied you have been about various parts of your life over the last two weeks.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Do you feel that some people treat you unfairly?</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Totally</th>
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<tr>
<th>Do you need someone to stand up for you when you have problems?</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Totally</th>
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<th>Do you worry about what might happen to you in the future?</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Totally</th>
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*For example, thinking about your need for care, or being a burden to others in the future.*
Summary – Measurement of QOL:

• 1) WHOQOL– 100 + modules .................. 100+ items

• 2) WHOQOL-BREF + modules .................... 26+ items

• 3) WHOQOL-AGE ...........................................13 items

• 3) EUROHIS-QOL ........................................... 8 items

• 4) G1 – “How would you rate your quality of life” ........ 1 item
WHAT IS MISSING FROM OUR MEASUREMENT OF HEALTH AND QOL?
WHO – International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) Model
WHO – International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) Model
What About the Impact of Attitudes on Health and Ageing?

- **Attitude Measurement** (e.g. *Attitudes to Ageing Questionnaire*, Laidlaw *et al.*, 2007; *Attitudes to Disability Scale*, Power *et al.*, 2010)

- **E.g. Attitudes to Ageing:**
  - *Psychosocial Loss*
  - *Physical Change*
  - *Psychological Growth*
  - Biological Ageing (it’s all downhill after 20)
  - Vs.
  - Psychological Ageing (things just keep getting better and better)
But what if we look further to the West? Where might the Yellow Brick Road Lead Us?

[.................. Philadelphia Sure Didnt Look Like That Last Time I was There!]
What About the Positive Psychology Movement?

Is the answer  More  Optimism and  Less Pessimism??

And is Martin Seligman in Philadelphia, the Head of the American Positive Psychology Movement, the new  Wizard of Pos  ???
What About the Positive Psychology Movement?

- Is the answer More Optimism and Less Pessimism??

- **Some Problems with this Deceptively Attractive Answer:**

  - Excessive, Unrealistic Optimism
  - “Negative emotions” are functional (e.g. Power & Dalgleish, 2008)
  - E.g. study of health conditions in older adults
  - E.g. less use of health screening, health prevention measures, unsafe sex ..........

  - Even optimists get ill and die – bad things happen ..... 

  - We need (constructive) pessimists (realists?) ........
Main Effects – Optimism is Better Than Pessimism?
Interaction Effects – It All Depends ………..
Isaacowitz & Seligman (2001)

.................A study of 67 older adults followed up at 6mths and 12mths

................. Assessed for stressful life events in the intervening period
Is It Better Therefore to be a Pessimist because bad things are going to happen??

• No!

• What about being an optimist when things are good, but a pessimist when things are bad?! ...............
Psychological Flexibility

• A mistake to think about fixed personality styles?........ As humans, we are the most flexible organism (along with viruses and bacteria?!) .......

• Executive Functions – Planning, Inhibition, Updating, Dual/Multi-Tasking

• Emotion Regulation –

• Coping Strategies –

• Resilience -

• Interpersonal flexibility –

• ......... Currently carrying out a review and developing a new measure

Psychological Flexibility - 2 (About to pilot questionnaire .....

• Thinking flexibility
• Planning flexibility
• Multi-tasking
• Emotional flexibility (including inhibiting, switching, updating)
• Interpersonal flexibility
• Life goal flexibility

• Stubbornness
• Single-mindedness
• Rumination
• Closed to experience

• + aspects of open-mindedness, resilience ...........

As Charles Darwin *Didn't* Say ..........

- “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one that is most adaptable to change”
Part of the facts is understanding we have a problem, and part of the facts is what you're going to do about it."

*George W. Bush, Kirtland, Ohio, April 15, 2005*

“The only way we can win is to leave before the job is done”

*4th Nov. 2006*