

Health-related quality of life (HRQoL)

Mapping HRQoL in Health Policy & Practice

The concept of HRQoL has only recently started entering mainstream health policy and practice beyond the space of Health Technology Assessment (HTA)

Definition

- HRQoL is a concept that expands the definition of health beyond the absence of illness or infirmity
- Two main characteristics:
 - a. **multi-dimensional**, encompassing the physical, mental and social domains of health*
 - b. **subjective**, linked to self-perceptions of health status
- A more actionable and measurable **sub-domain** of QoL (quality of life) focused on health

General use

- To increase health outcomes by including **patient-reported outcomes (PROs)**, an umbrella term for the measures to assess HRQoL
- To integrate aspects such as **well-being, physical health, mental health, stigma, discrimination** etc. in healthcare

HRQoL in EU legislation



- used by European Medicines Agency (EMA) for patients to self-report therapy effects in HTA
- used by European Commission for individuals to self-report other effects beyond therapy (i.e., harmful chemicals, toys, personalised healthcare, physical activity)



- used by the Commission to assess the health status of the general population and specific population groups (i.e., children, older people)



- used by the Commission in technical documents accompanying regulation and directives (i.e., impact assessments and guidance)
- prevalent in health law (DG SANTE) but also in social and environmental (EMPL, ENV)



- considered by the Commission a key indicator to achieve **person-centred models of care** associated with improved health outcomes and more sustainable healthcare management

Other use by EU institutions and agencies



- in technical documents (i.e., reports, annexes) of the Commission for the management of communicable and non-communicable diseases
- in active ageing initiatives on health as an impact assessment tool



- as a good practice example In the EPRS study for the European Parliament's input to the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan
- in cancer advocacy by many EU funded civil stakeholders



- used by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in the Dublin Questionnaire to monitor people living with HIV
- used by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) to measure the impact of drug abuse on health

*only sometimes are other domains included, such as spiritual, economic, sexual.

HRQoL in EU funding



- more than 3 million euros from EU funding health programmes allocated to civil society-led projects measuring disease impact on patient HRQoL



- Horizon Europe 2023 objectives include Improving HRQoL for patients in palliative and end-of-life care (and their caregivers)

HRQoL in EU research & statistics



- in the pan-European study measuring HRQoL for people living with HIV conducted by EPRS
- in the assessment of the benefits of person-centred care for patients and for the sustainability of healthcare systems conducted by the Joint Research Centre (JRC)



- in the Eurostat European Health Interview Survey (EHIS) on self-reported health status across Europe
- in the annual edition of the 'Demographic Outlook for the EU'

HRQoL use by WHO and OECD



- endorsed by OECD in 2017 as a key indicator to measure health status for improved outcomes
- used in Patient-Reported Indicators Surveys (PaRIS) initiative as part of patient-reported measures (PROMs)



- OECD calls for more systematic use of HRQoL in Europe
- used by OECD in the impact assessment of telemedicine & mental care on patient health



- used by WHO/Europe and OECD to measure the health status of specific population groups (i.e., adolescents, people living with measles, with dementia, students, etc.)

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