Epidemiology and social psychiatry

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A multi-attribute utility instrument suitable for use in individuals with psychosis – the AQoL-4D: Findings from the Second Australian National Survey of Psychosis

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Introduction   Multi-attribute utility instruments (MAUIs) are generic health-related quality of life (HRQoL) measures that enable valuation of health states relative to death (0.0) and full health (1.0). The usefulness of MAUIs in people with psychosis has been questioned, with the EQ-5D considered "insensitive", the 15D "problematic" and the SF-6D "unsuitable".
Objectives   Confirm the Assessment of Quality of Life (AQoL)-4D MAUI is useful and meaningful in people with psychosis.
Aims   Assess utility values across demographic, general and disease-specific health categorisations for a large nationally-representative sample with psychosis ($n = 1825$).
Methods   Participants underwent a comprehensive 32 module interview encompassing psychopathology to service use. Utility values were calculated by applying a standard algorithm to responses to each of 12 items of the AQoL-4D.
Results   Utility values were assessed for 1793 participants (98.2%). No ceiling effect was observed and only 6.6% of participants scored in the top decile of HRQoL [0.9–10.0]. In contrast, 10.8% scored in the lowest decile [−0.04–0.10], a floor effect observed in 0.4%. The mean utility value was 0.49 (95% CI: 0.48–0.51), significantly lower than the Australian population norm of 0.81 (95% CI: 0.81–0.82). Greatest impacts on HRQoL were for diminishing global independent functioning as measured by the MSIF (ES_{MSIF}: 0.68–2.24), self-rated current mental health (ES_{MH}: 0.15–1.65) and physical health status (ES_{PH}: 0.11–1.21). Strong effects also observed for course of disorder (ES_{CoD}: 0.08–1.13), current suicidal ideation (ES_{CSI1}: 0.76–1.08), and labor force participation (ES_{LFP}: 0.11–0.97).
Conclusions   The AQoL-4D had good lower end sensitivity in a large sample of people with a psychotic illness, and demonstrated responsiveness across subjective, objective and symptom measures.

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Loneliness is adversely associated with lifestyle and physical and mental health

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Introduction   Loneliness is a common emotional distress experience and there is increasing evidence of associations with unhealthy lifestyle and adverse health-related factors. Little is known about age and sex as potential effect modifiers, and about the prevalence of loneliness.
Objective/aims   To assess the associations of loneliness with behavioral, physical and mental health factors, taking sex and age into account and to examine the prevalence of loneliness in individuals aged 15+ years.
Methods   Data from 20,007 participants of the cross-sectional population-based Swiss Health Survey 2012 were analyzed. The association of loneliness with lifestyle and health-related factors were assessed with logistic regression analyses. Wald tests were used to test for age and sex differences.
Results   Loneliness was reported by 64.1% of individuals, and was associated with smoking (OR 1.13, 95% CI 1.05–1.23), physical inactivity (1.20, 1.10–1.31), non-adherence to the 5-a-day recommendation for fruit and vegetable consumption (1.21, 1.07–1.37), and more visits to a physician within the last year (1.29, 1.17–1.42). Loneliness was also associated with high cholesterol levels (1.31, 1.18–1.45), diabetes (1.40, 1.16–1.67), self-reported chronic diseases (1.41, 1.30–1.54), impaired self-perceived health (1.94, 1.74–2.16), moderate and high psychological distress (3.74, 3.37–4.16), and depression (2.78, 2.22–3.48). Age modulated the associations in BMI, smoking, visiting a physician within the past year, and self-perceived health. Sex did generally not modulate the associations.
Conclusion   Loneliness is associated with unhealthy lifestyle, and poorer physical and mental health. Associations were modulated by age, but not sex. Further longitudinal studies are needed to elucidate the causal relationships of these associations.

Genetics and molecular neurobiology

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Potential blood gene expression markers for postpartum psychosis

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Background   Postpartum psychosis (PP) is the most severe psychiatric disorder associated with childbirth. Previous evidence has shown gene expression alterations in immune profile in women