

Editorial

Quality of Life in Patients with Cancer: Translation and Validation of Instruments

The evaluation of the quality of life has been the aim of various researchers, especially in the evaluation of individuals with cancer. The quality of life has been an end point with growing participation in randomized clinical trials, as pointed out by Efficace et al.¹ in a review of the quality of life outcomes from RCTs, which was verified that between 1990 and 2000, 39.3% of RCTs presented a quality of life outcome and after the year 2000, this frequency had already grown to 64.3%.

However, it should be noted that most of the research in oncology refers to health-related quality of life, as the concept of quality of life is much more comprehensive than aspects related to the health of the individual.

The methodological planning of research has as objective to evaluate the quality of life presupposing the definition of several aspects: the outline of the study; the sample; the data collection method, the choice of instruments and statistical analysis.

The choice of the instrument is one of the main aspects of methodological planning. QOL can be evaluated through instruments that can be developed by the author or from instruments already validated. It is known that the development of QOL instruments is complex and makes the comparison of results unfeasible; therefore, the use of validated instruments has been a recurrent practice. Another aspect of frequent concern is the use of instruments in a language different from the original language in which the instrument was validated. Transcultural adaptation and

the verification of the psychometric properties of the instrument in the language for which the instrument was validated is necessary.

This issue presents the evaluation of reproducibility, an important characteristic of QL instruments; FACT-G being a specific instrument of evaluation of the quality of life in oncology that was translated to Portuguese.

The availability of quality of life instruments specific to oncology that are valid and reliable allows the identification of aspects of the quality of life relevant to oncologic patients that cannot be captured by generic instruments of quality of life evaluation.

Besides the methodological questions related to the quality of life, there are also points of interest not only for researchers but also for the professionals involved with the care to these patients, the interpretation of clinically significant values and the role of evaluation of the quality of life in the therapeutic decision process. These points should be discussed with the subsidy of research with adequate methodological outline and with reliable and valid instruments.

1. Efficace F, Osoba D, Gotay C, Sprangers M, Coens C, Bottomley A. Has the quality of health-related quality of life reporting in cancer clinical trials improved over time? Towards bridging the gap with clinical decision making. *Ann Oncol.* 2007;18:775-81.

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