EQUIVALENCE OF PAPER AND TOUCH SCREEN VERSIONS OF THE EQ-SD VISIBLE ANALOG SCALE (EQ-VAS)
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OBJECTIVES: The EQ-VAS, a measure of self-reported health status, has been operationalized in ways that depart from the original format. This study examines the equivalence of the original paper-based vertical format with a touch-screen-based horizontal format. METHODS: Non-probability sampling was employed to recruit 314 subjects intended to reflect the primary socio-demographic characteristics of the general adult population. A two part questionnaire was administered in a randomized crossover design. One part was the original paper-based 20cm vertical EQ-VAS; the other part was touch screen computer-based (designed by Assist Technologies) and included, among other items/scales, a horizontal EQ-VAS, the SF-36, and socio-demographic items. The two EQ-VAS formats were completed roughly ten minutes apart. To test for minimally important differences (MID) between EQ-VAS scores, a difference of half a standard deviation (~8 points on the 100 point scale) was used as the equivalence threshold. RESULTS: The mean (SD) EQ-VAS score was 81.0 (15.4) on the paper and 79.6 (15.2) on the touch-screen. The mean (CI) difference between scores on the two formats was 1.4 (0.19 to 2.58) points and the mean absolute difference was 5.3 (4.22 to 6.44) points. The intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was 0.75, indicating good agreement between the two scores. Almost a third (30.1%) of the respondents had difference scores on both formats and 80.1% of the respondents had difference scores within ± eight points. Using nonparametric bootstrap techniques, both the mean difference and the mean absolute difference between scores on the two formats were significantly less (p < 0.001) than the equivalence threshold. In addition, data collected via touch screen may be more reliable since 22% of subjects did not complete the EQ-VAS paper format as instructed. CONCLUSION: These results provide evidence for the measurement equivalence of this EQ-VAS touch screen format with the original paper format.

INFLUENCE OF VARIOUS HEALTH STATUS MEASURES ON TOTAL EXPENDITURES IN THE MEPS DATASET
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OBJECTIVES: The Model of Health Services Use is an analytic framework incorporating predisposing, enabling, and need predictor variables to explain patients’ use of health care resources. We applied this model to the consolidated year 2000 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS), a representative survey of the US civilian, non-institutionalized population, to compare the influence of various need variables, perceived health status, on the outcome of total health-related expenditures. METHODS: Multivariate linear regression models were developed, maintaining a core set of predictor (predisposing and enabling) and dependent (total health care expenditures) variables, varying only the need predictor variables. Predisposing variables include age, gender, race, education, and marital status; enabling variables include insurance type, employment status, family size, and household income; need variables included summary scores of two general health status measures (SF-12 PCS and MCS and the EQ-SD—Index and VAS), and single-item core MEPS questions of perceived mental and physical health status. Analysis took into account the complex design of the dataset. R2 of each model is presented for descriptive comparison. RESULTS: Data from this MEPS dataset was obtained from 16076 respondents, representing over 209 million US residents. The base model, containing only predisposing and enabling variables, had an R2 of 0.064. The models using the single-item core questions of perceived mental and physical health status separately yielded R2 values of 0.073 and 0.104, respectively, with an R2 of 0.105 when both were included. R2 values for the models containing the SF-12 MCS, SF-12 PCS, EQ-SD index, and EQ-SD VAS individually were 0.068, 0.084, 0.065, and 0.071, respectively. Including the SF-12 MCS and PCS together in one model, the R2 was 0.086. CONCLUSION: The results imply that the single-item core health-status questions used by the MEPS perform marginally better than the SF-12 or EQ-SD to explain total expenditures.

LINKING DISEASE-SPECIFIC QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL) SCALES
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OBJECTIVES: To identify the most effective method of linking disease-specific scales through the application of Rasch analysis. METHODS: Scales assessing rheumatoid arthritis (RAQoL) and adult growth hormone deficiency (QoL-AGHDA) were selected for linkage. Interviews were conducted with 38 patients to identify additional items relevant to both diseases. A postal survey was then conducted with 103 RA and 98 GHD patients. Two main linking approaches were assessed; linking the two scales by the nine additional (common) items identified and use of an independent anchor or test (the PGWB). Here, all items in the PGWB are combined with all items in each of the scales. RESULTS: Adding the nine common items identified in the RAQoL led to a scale with excellent fit to the Rasch model; Item Fit (mean = -0.19, SD = 1.22), Person Fit (mean = -0.21, SD = 0.89) and Person Separation Index (0.94). Adding the nine items to the QoL-AGHDA also led to excellent fit to the model; Item Fit (mean = -0.14, SD = 1.46), Person Fit (mean = 0.015, SD = 0.84) and Person Separation Index (0.96). Comparison of scores on the nine common items suggested that the GHD group had worse quality of life than RA patients. Use of the PGWB as a linking test led to considerable item misfit in both scales. CONCLUSION: Use of the PGWB as an anchor test was unsuccessful (probably as it assesses well-being (impairment) rather than QoL). For the purposes of constructing an item bank common item equating appears to be feasible. Such co-calibration provides an opportunity for valid and accurate comparisons of the impact of different diseases on patient groups. It must be noted that co-calibration requires that the scales to be linked adopt the same measurement model.

THE UK EQ-SD INDEX: AN EVALUATION OF FACE VALIDITY IN HOSPITAL TREATED SUBJECTS
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OBJECTIVE: The EQSDindex, is widely used to evaluate health preferences and provide utility estimates. Objective of this study was to evaluate the face-validity of the EQSDindex. METHODS: Data used here were the first 40,000 responses in the Health Outcomes Data Repository (HODAR). In addition to survey data HODAR details clinical phenotype. Patients were surveyed with the EQSDindex (excluding the VAS), and the SF36. A simultaneous measure quantified health status on an arbitrary scale of 0 to 100 pre-admission and post-discharge. The EQSDindex has 243
potential values. RESULTS: Frequency distribution of the EQ5D naïve was tri-modal and difficult to describe in summary statistics. In all, 27 possible values (11%) were responsible for 92% of all observations, 14 possible values had no observations, and 24.7% of returns had an EQ5D naïve of 1.0. There are a number of categories that are rarely used e.g., severe mobility problems and severe self care problems. There was a close correlation between weighted scale and simple addition of responses ($R^2 = 0.87$). There were 6.8% of responses with an EQ-5D naïve ≤ 0.0. There was a low correlation between the EQ5D naïve with the general health question of the SF36 and the arbitrary, continuous valuation of health status above. The ranking of mean estimates was intuitively correct. CONCLUSIONS: The number of theoretical values that are represented was sparse. The EQ-5D naïve distribution results in no easily describable parametric distribution, and the correlation with other general health measures was low. Given that these subjects are hospital treated, too many may have a health status of 1.0, and too many are also in a health status notionally equal to or worse than death. Decisions based on the EQ5D naïve now have enormous health and commercial implications. The EQ5D classifies the right health factors but the sensitivity and scoring methods need urgent revaluation: good but needs improving.

**HEALTH UTILITIES INDEX (HUI) ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE SYSTEM: CRITERION VALIDITY OF MULTI- AND SINGLE-ATTRIBUTE UTILITY SCORES**

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OBJECTIVES: To assess the criterion validity of HUI Mark 2 (HUI2) and Mark 3 (HUI3) utility scores from a new, centralized on-line questionnaire administration system. METHODS: The system presents HUI questionnaires to patients and provides results to clinicians by email. Questionnaire results include responses and 32 derived variables (14 attribute levels; two overall health state vectors; 14 single-attribute utility scores; and two multi-attribute utility scores of health-related quality of life (HRQL)). SPSS code, validated to Health Utilities Inc. decision tables for determining attribute levels and published utility functions, is the criterion method for determining HUI derived variables. Testing used a data set that included questionnaire response combinations for all HUI2 and HUI3 attribute levels. Criterion validity was evaluated using percent exact agreement, and single-measure intra-class correlation coefficients (ICC), between scores from the new system and scores from the criterion method. RESULTS: The test data set generated 240 utility scores. There was exact agreement for 99.2% (n = 238) of the scores. Disagreement was limited to HUI2 sensation (ICC = 0.803, p < 0.01), and HUI2 overall HRQL (ICC = 0.966, p < 0.01), scores in one test case. Results were received by email from the on-line system within approximately one minute of completing each questionnaire. There were no missing or incomplete questionnaire data from the on-line system. CONCLUSION: The results indicate that most of the utility scores from the new on-line questionnaire system have criterion validity and there is a problem with the coding algorithm for at least one set of questionnaire response combinations associated with HUI2 sensation. The coding problem should be corrected, and more rigorous testing should be completed, before public release of the system. The system should be considered an alternative to traditional methods for future HUI data collection, especially for applications requiring immediate results such as clinical settings.