

Abstract to: CONFERENCE ON MEANINGFUL RELATIONS IN AGING AND DYING

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Primary Applications: Contributions to relational theory; Research on meaning in life

Title
The good old days – Existential aspects of older adults Health-related Quality of Life [HRQL]
Background
Today life expectancy is long, 1/3 of older adults have depressive symptoms. The last decades the existential dimension has proven to be of importance for health. WHO developed in 2002 a trans-cultural module of existential items to their WHOQOL questionnaire. This Spirituality, Religiousness and Personal Beliefs facets [SRPB] consist of eight aspects. The WHOQOL-group develop 2005 an OLD module. Recently, the SRPB and SRPB-BREF has been adapted for the Swedish context, in one adult and one adolescent module. To better understand older adults HRQL, especially in secular countries, is it important to adapt WHOQOL-OLD-SRPB to the Swedish context.
Aim
To present the first qualitative step in adaption and cultural validation of the SRPB for integrating it into the Swedish WHOQOL-OLD.
Method
Four focus groups with 26 older adults (age 69–95; $M=79,6$; 23 female) first answered the Swedish WHOQOL-OLD and SRPB questionnaire, afterwards the interviews were organized and content analysed.
Findings
The participants emphasized that the existential aspects were important for understanding their HRQL. The SRPB items: Faith, Spiritual Connection and Spiritual Strength items was mostly interpreted in traditionally religious terms, rather than according to the WHOQOL-SRPB perspective (also including secular beliefs). The participants suggested alternative wording for some of the items for instance Peace and Hope: “Hope [laughing] – I’m 95 years old, I don’t have any hope for the future”.
Conclusion
The results underlines the importance of adapting the WHOQOL-SRPB questionnaire to specific age groups and cultural (secularised) contexts, in order to better understand HRQL among older adults.
Key words
WHOQOL; SRPB; Quality of life; Older adults; Existential; Spiritual; health