

ASSESSING QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL) IN PERSONS WITH COPD

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Purpose: Patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) experience symptoms (dyspnea, fatigue, etc.) that adversely affect their functional capacity. Previous research shows that the functional limitations associated with COPD may have a significant effect on patients' QOL. However, few studies have examined COPD patients' QOL using both generic and disease specific measures. The purpose of this study is to describe the QOL of patients with COPD and to examine relationships among disease specific and generic measures of QOL and a disease specific symptom measure. **Method:** This study uses a descriptive cross-sectional design and is part of a larger study designed to describe QOL of patients with COPD and their family caregivers. Participants are being recruited from two outpatient pulmonary clinics in a large metropolitan city located in the Mid-South. Participants will complete five questionnaires: the St. George Respiratory Questionnaire (disease specific, [SGRQ]), the Bronchitis-Emphysema Symptom Checklist (BESC), Quality of Life Index (QLI), Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), General QOL measure (GenQOL), and a demographic data form (developed for the study). Additional variables such as smoking status, pack years, number of exacerbations, and comorbidities are also measured.

Findings: Data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analyses to address the study aims. **Discussion:** QOL has become an important issue in the management of COPD. The combination of disease specific and generic measures may be more appropriate because it provides a more comprehensive and precise description of the effects of the disease on patients' overall QOL. Assessing the QOL experienced by this patient population can provide key insights regarding the effectiveness of treatment and inform health care policy.