

A QUALITATIVE VALIDATION OF THE MINNESOTA LIVING WITH HEART FAILURE QUESTIONNAIRE IN TERMINAL HEART FAILURE

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a) Object

The aim of our study was to qualitatively explore issues of validation, sensitivity and compliance concerning the Minnesota Living with Heart Failure (MLHF) questionnaire in patients with terminal heart failure.

b) Methods

We included 31 patients in this two-year prospective longitudinal case study, comprising three semi-structured interviews per patient.

c) Results

- the (essential) introduction to the questionnaire is almost never read
- patients' answers do not represent the impact of a symptom (as intended) but mere absence or presence
- respondents did *not* answer items for the last month, as intended
- often, more than one thing is asked in one question.
- respondents failed to understand a concept and / or gave widely different interpretations to it.
- items often had no relevance to patients (any more).
- even considerably handicapped patients had no physical or mental difficulty completing the questionnaire.

d) Discussion

The high item non-response is due to poor questionnaire construction. Low specificity is due to difficulty distinguishing between handicaps related to heart failure and others.

Simple qualitative pre-testing techniques are valuable tools in the validation of self-completion instruments.

e) Conclusion

MLHF is *not valid in its entirety* because it fails to measure the intended concept.