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Country-specific recalibration of the Assessment of Quality of Life (AQoL-2) instrument for use with adolescents

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Abstract

Abstract: The Pacific Obesity Prevention in Communities (OPIC) Project is a community-based intervention project in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga designed to increase the capacity of the Pacific region to respond to the obesity crisis. The linked economic studies included the administration of the Assessment of Quality of Life (AQoL-2) instrument to facilitate description of the quality of life burden of adolescent overweight and obesity and as an outcome measure in a cost-utility analysis of the interventions. This required recalibration of the utility weights which were based on Australian adult health preferences for adolescents on a country-specific basis. As in the original development of the instrument, the time trade-off methodology was employed to elicit health state preferences. Thirty multi-attribute health states were generated from the AQoL with each participant required to complete a set of 10. The time trade-off interviews were conducted in a group setting in the classroom with senior secondary students. To our knowledge, this is the first time that time trade-off methodology has been employed with adolescents in a classroom setting. Thirty-six groups (6 per country) involving 279 students across the four countries completed 2,790 scenarios. The completed health states were then used to recalibrate the AQoL-2 scaling system and to produce algorithms for computing utility scores for any of the health states described by AQoL-2, using a multiplicative model. Plausible differences in results were found between adolescents in the four countries. The utility weights in the AQoL algorithm were revised separately for adolescents on a country-specific basis, meaning that the AdQoL version of the AQoL 2 can now be validly used in the economic evaluation of both the OPIC interventions and any other adolescent programs in these countries.

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