

Title: Congruence of the Stroke Specific Quality of Life (SSQOL) Domains and Stroke Survivors' Perceptions on Physical Wellbeing: A Mixed-Methods Exploratory Sequential Study

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Background:

The SSQOL is a stroke-specific measure to assess functional status and health-related quality of life. While the SSQOL has been validated previously, studies have not examined the congruence between SSQOL domains and stroke survivors' perceptions through qualitative methods, which could provide insights into whether the SSQOL comprehensively captures relevant aspects of physical wellbeing. Using a mixed-methods, exploratory sequential design, this study aims to examine the congruence between SSQOL domains and stroke survivors' perceptions on physical wellbeing.

Methods:

Twelve stroke survivors and caregivers were recruited to participate in virtual focus group discussions on factors that influence physical wellbeing. A semi-structured interview guide was developed to assess physical wellbeing through questions including "Did you have difficulty with accessibility in the home?", "What were expected challenges in the community?", and other questions designed to address physical functioning. The SSQOL was administered after focus group sessions. Interviews were transcribed and coded using NVivo software. Three independent coders analyzed transcripts. Framework method analysis was used generate parent codes and identify themes related to physical wellbeing and its impact on recovery.

Results:

Analysis of qualitative data revealed three major themes: (1) the loss of independence on physical wellbeing; (2) feelings of shame affecting reintegration within communities; (3) challenges in the home environment due to limited mobility. Findings indicate that while stroke survivors' perceptions of mobility were effectively captured by the SSQOL, it did not adequately reflect perceptions on loss of independence and feelings of shame (Table 1).

Conclusion:

The findings suggest that perceptions related to mobility and balance aligned with the SSQOL, while experiences related to loss of independence and shame were not captured by the SSQOL. Future studies are required to understand the mechanisms through which these unique barriers identified by stroke survivors are addressed by clinicians and the impact their recovery and wellbeing.