Methods for the analysis of quality-of-life and survival data in health technology assessment

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Record Status
This is a bibliographic record of a published health technology assessment from a member of INAHTA. No evaluation of the quality of this assessment has been made for the HTA database.

Citation

Authors' objectives
This study identifies and reviews critically the methods proposed for the analysis of quality-of-life and survival data in health technology assessment, particularly those that assess both these endpoints simultaneously. In this way methodology that requires wider dissemination can be identified together with areas requiring further research. It was not within the remit of this study to address issues related to the meaning, definition and measurement of quality of life.

Authors' conclusions
Obtaining appropriate data:

The method of analysis needs to be decided at the design stage of a study so that appropriate quality-of-life data can be collected. Issues to consider are:

- the quality-of-life instrument to be used
- the frequency and timing of quality-of-life assessments
- the need to minimise non-compliance
- the collection of additional information, such as reason for drop-out
- the sample size required.

Choosing the appropriate method:

The choice of method should be based on the research question that the study aims to answer. The advantages and disadvantages of each method should be considered carefully together with the relevance and interpretability of the results to clinicians and patients.

Methods used to analyse longitudinal quality-of-life data must allow for informative drop-out.

Reporting the analysis:

Methods used should be reported clearly, with details of definitions and assumptions used in the analysis.

A sensitivity analysis should be carried out to assess the robustness of conclusions to any critical assumptions made in the analysis.

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