

Older People's Quality of Life Questionnaire (OPQOL) summed scoring and reverse coding:

OPQOL items coded 1-5; scoring = – reverse coding of positive items;

sum sub-scales – names as marked in table headers; sum total for overall score

+/-OPQOL: reverse coding of positively worded items + (5-1) so higher scores represented higher QoL

OPQOL items:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (*5-point Likert response scale: Strongly agree to Strongly disagree coded 1-5 as indicated in questionnaire*)

Life overall

1. I enjoy my life overall
2. I am happy much of the time
3. I look forward to things
4. Life gets me down

Health

5. I have a lot of physical energy
6. Pain affects my well-being
7. My health restricts me looking after myself or my home
8. I am healthy enough to get out and about

Social relationships/leisure and social activities

9. My family, friends or neighbours would help me if needed
10. I would like more companionship or contact with other people
11. I have someone who gives me love and affection
12. I'd like more people to enjoy life with
- 12a. I have my children around which is important *
29. I have social or leisure activities/hobbies that I enjoy doing
30. I try to stay involved with things
31. I do paid or unpaid work or activities that give me a role in life

Independence, control over life, freedom

13. I am healthy enough to have my independence
14. I can please myself what I do
15. The cost of things compared to my pension/income restricts my life
16. I have a lot of control over the important things in my life
32. I have responsibilities to others that restrict my social or leisure activities

Home and neighbourhood

17. I feel safe where I live
18. The local shops, services and facilities are good overall
19. I get pleasure from my home
20. I find my neighbourhood friendly

Psychological and emotional well-being

21. I take life as it comes and make the best of things
22. I feel lucky compared to most people
23. I tend to look on the bright side

24. If my health limits social/leisure activities, then I will compensate and find something else I can do

Financial circumstances

25. I have enough money to pay for household bills

26. I have enough money to pay for household repairs or help needed in the house

27. I can afford to buy what I want to

28. I cannot afford to do things I would enjoy

Religion/culture

33. Religion, belief or philosophy is important to my quality of life *

34 (35). Cultural/religious events/festivals are important to my quality of life *

*[Note: the 32 item version was used in Qol follow-up survey; a 35 item version was used in ONS Omnibus and Ethnibus surveys; three additional items were included after holding focus groups with ethnically diverse older people - marked with *]*

OPQOL norms, in 2007-8, for a national random population sample aged 65+, a national ethnically diverse sample aged 65+, and a follow-up of people aged 65+ in 1999/200 are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Older people's Quality of Life Questionnaire (OPQOL) items+			
	Ethnibus 2008	ONS Omnibus 2008	QoL Survey follow-up 2007/8
	(35 items, range 35- 175)	(35 items, range 35- 175)	(32 items, range 32-160)
OPQOL items:	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
1. Life overall:			
<i>1. + I enjoy my life overall</i>			
Strongly agree	18 (73)	38 (224)	21 (59) ****
Agree	34 (137)	53 (310)	61 (171)
Neither agree nor disagree	37 (148)	7 (42)	14 (40)
Disagree	9 (35)	2 (11)	4 (12)
Strongly disagree	2 (7)	---	
<i>2. + I am happy much of the time</i>			
Strongly agree	10 (41)	34 (197)	18 (50)****

Agree	32 (126)	59 (344)	66 (184)
Neither agree nor disagree	49 (196)	5 (32)	12 (32)
Disagree	8 (33)	2 (13)	4 (12)
Strongly disagree	1 (4)	---	---
3. + I look forward to things			
Strongly agree	15 (60)	36 (209)	21 (57) ****
Agree	42 (166)	53 (312)	58 (163)
Neither agree nor disagree	38 (152)	8 (47)	17 (48)
Disagree	5 (21)	3 (17)	4 (11)
Strongly disagree	--- (1)	--- (2)	---
4. - Life gets me down			
Strongly agree	14 (57)	1 (8)	2 (4) ****
Agree	47 (187)	12 (72)	7 (20)
Neither agree nor disagree	23 (92)	17 (100)	25 (69)
Disagree	12 (48)	48 (279)	44 (118)
Strongly disagree	4 (16)	22 (127)	22 (61)
2. Health and functioning:			
5. + I have a lot of physical energy			
Strongly agree	13 (53)	12 (71)	6 (17) ****
Agree	41 (165)	34 (202)	28 (76)
Neither agree nor disagree	30 (121)	19 (113)	36 (96)
Disagree	13 (51)	29 (164)	27 (74)
Strongly disagree	3 (10)	6 (36)	3 (9)
6. - Pain affects my well-being±			

Strongly agree	14 (56)	8 (50)	8 (21) ****
Agree	40 (161)	29 (169)	28 (76)
Neither agree nor disagree	32 (128)	15 (86)	21 (56)
Disagree	10 (39)	35 (205)	33 (89)
Strongly disagree	4 (16)	13 (77)	10 (28)
7. - My health restricts me looking after myself or my home			
Strongly agree	15 (61)	4 (26)	5 (13) ****
Agree	33 (133)	15 (88)	12 (34)
Neither agree nor disagree	37 (148)	7 (39)	14 (39)
Disagree	11 (44)	47 (276)	43 (119)
Strongly disagree	4 (14)	27 (158)	26 (71)
8. + I am healthy enough to get out and about			
Strongly agree	8 (30)	39 (227)	29 (81) ****
Agree	32 (130)	47 (276)	51 (144)
Neither agree nor disagree	48 (192)	5 (31)	9 (24)
Disagree	11 (44)	5 (30)	8 (21)
Strongly disagree	1 (4)	4 (23)	3 (10)
3a. Social relationships:			
9. + My family, friends or neighbours would help me if needed			
Strongly agree	6 (26)	49 (286)	44 (125) ****
Agree	31 (123)	45 (263)	49 (138)
Neither agree nor disagree	55 (219)	4 (23)	6 (18)

Disagree	8 (31)	2 (12)	--- (1)
Strongly disagree	--- (1)	--- (2)	--- (1)
<i>10. - I would like more companionship or contact with other people</i>			
Strongly agree	3 (13)	4 (21)	4 (10) ****
Agree	33 (134)	16 (95)	19 (53)
Neither agree nor disagree	42 (167)	27 (157)	42 (117)
Disagree	20 (79)	46 (272)	29 (79)
Strongly disagree	2 (7)	7 (41)	6 (17)
<i>11. + I have someone who gives me love and affection</i>			
Strongly agree	10 (38)	50 (297)	45 (125) ****
Agree	45 (178)	38 (222)	35 (96)
Neither agree nor disagree	--- ---	5 (28)	13 (36)
Disagree	44 (177)	5 (29)	6 (17)
Strongly disagree	2 (7)	2 (10)	1 (4)
<i>12/a - I'd like more people to enjoy life with</i>			
Strongly agree	3 (14)	4 (25)	5 (13) ****
Agree	32 (130)	25 (149)	21 (58)
Neither agree nor disagree	41 (164)	27 (157)	42 (116)
Disagree	22 (86)	39 (229)	27 (76)
Strongly disagree	2 (6)	5 (27)	5 (14)
<i>12/b. Aia.± + I have my children around which is important</i>			

Strongly agree	10 (38)	37 (217)	<i>n/a</i>
Agree	34 (138)	31 (182)	
Neither agree nor disagree	39 (156)	11 (63)	
Disagree	15 (61)	11 (64)	
Strongly disagree [<i>includes no children</i>]	2 (7)	9 (54)	
4. Independence, control over life, freedom:			
<i>13. + I am healthy enough to have my independence</i> <i>(independence- health)</i>			
Strongly agree	7 (26)	39 (231)	32 (93) ****
Agree	23 (93)	48 (282)	50 (142)
Neither agree nor disagree	41 (163)	5 (25)	9 (26)
Disagree	23 (93)	6 (37)	7 (19)
Strongly disagree	6 (25)	2 (12)	2 (6)
<i>14. + I can please myself what I do</i> (<i>freedom, autonomy</i>)			
Strongly agree	10 (39)	42 (246)	30 (84) ****
Agree	45 (180)	48 (281)	53 (151)
Neither agree nor disagree	15 (62)	6 (37)	11 (31)
Disagree	24 (94)	3 (15)	5 (14)
Strongly disagree	6 (25)	1 (8)	1 (4)
<i>15. - The cost of things compared to my pension/income restricts my life</i> (<i>independence-financial</i>)			
Strongly agree	12 (48)	11 (64)	8 (23) ****

Agree	15 (60)	28 (162)	23 (65)
Neither agree nor disagree	24 (96)	20 (119)	31 (86)
Disagree	42 (169)	36 (213)	32 (91)
Strongly disagree	7 (27)	5 (29)	6 (18)
16. + I have a lot of control over the important things in my life (control)			
Strongly agree	13 (53)	37 (219)	26 (74) ****
Agree	41 (163)	53 (313)	56 (161)
Neither agree nor disagree	29 (115)	6 (32)	14 (40)
Disagree	17 (69)	4 (22)	3 (8)
Strongly disagree	--- ---	--- (1)	1 (3)
32. - I have responsibilities to others that restrict my social or leisure activities			
Strongly agree	5 (18)	3 (15)	4 (12) ****
Agree	15 (59)	10 (60)	12 (33)
Neither agree nor disagree	20 (82)	7 (40)	16 (44)
Disagree	38 (152)	62 (365)	50 (135)
Strongly disagree	22 (89)	18 (107)	17 (47)
5. Home and neighbourhood:			
17. + I feel safe where I live			
Strongly agree	14 (190)	46 (269)	35 (99) ****
Agree	40 (161)	47 (275)	53 (151)
Neither agree nor disagree	9 (36)	4 (24)	9 (26)
Disagree	3 (12)	2 (13)	3 (7)

Strongly disagree	--- (1)	1 (6)	--- (1)
<i>18. + The local shops, services and facilities are good overall</i>			
Strongly agree	32 (127)	22 (132)	23 (64) ****
Agree	54 (216)	50 (293)	59 (168)
Neither agree nor disagree	13 (53)	11 (60)	9 (26)
Disagree	1 (4)	14 (83)	7 (20)
Strongly disagree	--- ---	3 (18)	2 (5)
<i>19. + I get pleasure from my home</i>			
Strongly agree	5 (18)	45 (263)	44 (124) ****
Agree	33 (133)	51 (299)	50 (140)
Neither agree nor disagree	49 (197)	3 (17)	5 (15)
Disagree	12 (48)	1 (8)	1 (4)
Strongly disagree	1 (4)	---	
<i>20. + I find my neighbourhood friendly</i>			
Strongly agree	4 (15)	36 (209)	28 (80) ****
Agree	21 (86)	53 (314)	54 (152)
Neither agree nor disagree	58 (232)	7 (44)	15 (41)
Disagree	16 (62)	3 (16)	3 (8)
Strongly disagree	1 (5)	1 (3)	-- (1)
6. Psychological and emotional well-being:			
<i>21. + I take life as it comes and make the best of things</i>			
Strongly agree	14 (57)	43 (256)	35 (98) ****

Agree	45 (179)	51 (302)	58 (164)
Neither agree nor disagree	35 (141)	4 (22)	7 (19)
Disagree	6 (23)	1 (6)	---
Strongly disagree	--- ---	--- (1)	---
22. + I feel lucky compared to most people			
Strongly agree	6 (22)	42 (243)	33 (92) ****
Agree	23 (90)	49 (289)	54 (151)
Neither agree nor disagree	42 (169)	7 (43)	12 (35)
Disagree	24 (98)	2 (11)	1 (3)
Strongly disagree	5 (21)	--- (2)	---
23. + I tend to look on the bright side			
Strongly agree	10 (38)	35 (208)	27 (76) ****
Agree	33 (133)	55 (321)	56 (158)
Neither agree nor disagree	37 (147)	9 (50)	14 (40)
Disagree	20 (82)	1 (8)	2 (6)
Strongly disagree	--- ---	---	---
24. + If my health limits social/leisure activities, then I will compensate and find something else I can do			
Strongly agree	24 (96)	19 (114)	21 (59) ****
Agree	28 (112)	62 (365)	55 (154)
Neither agree nor disagree	30 (121)	14 (83)	22 (62)
Disagree	17 (67)	4 (20)	2 (6)
Strongly disagree	1 (4)	1 (4)	---

7. Financial circumstances:			
25. + I have enough money to pay for household bills			
Strongly agree	17 (67)	25 (148)	29 (81) ****
Agree	17 (69)	66 (388)	59 (168)
Neither agree nor disagree	37 (149)	5 (28)	9 (24)
Disagree	25 (99)	3 (18)	3 (10)
Strongly disagree	4 (16)	1 (5)	
26. + I have enough money to pay for household repairs or help needed in the house ø			
Strongly agree	12 (48)	19 (107)	21 (57) ****
Agree	11 (44)	51 (296)	45 (125)
Neither agree nor disagree	40 (161)	19 (111)	20 (57)
Disagree	31 (124)	9 (53)	13 (37)
Strongly disagree	6 (23)	2 (10)	1 (4)
27. + I can afford to buy what I want to			
Strongly agree	9 (37)	10 (58)	17 (41) ****
Agree	9 (37)	47 (275)	41 (114)
Neither agree nor disagree	38 (153)	19 (110)	23 (64)
Disagree	32 (128)	21 (122)	17 (49)
Strongly disagree	12 (45)	3 (20)	2 (6)
28. - I cannot afford to do things I would enjoy			
Strongly agree	8 (31)	5 (30)	3 (8) ****
Agree	9 (36)	20 (116)	19 (54)

Neither agree nor disagree	28 (112)	20 (117)	28 (77)
Disagree	34 (134)	48 (283)	38 (106)
Strongly disagree	22 (87)	7 (39)	12 (35)
3b. Leisure and social activities:			
<i>29. + I have social or leisure activities/hobbies that I enjoy doing</i>			
Strongly agree	8 (30)	28 (165)	20 (57) ****
Agree	36 (144)	51 (300)	54 (149)
Neither agree nor disagree	30 (122)	10 (57)	18 (49)
Disagree	17 (68)	9 (51)	7 (20)
Strongly disagree	9 (36)	2 (13)	1 (4)
<i>30. - I try to stay involved with things</i>			
Strongly agree	8 (32)	26 (154)	18 (51) ****
Agree	30 (120)	57 (335)	57 (157)
Neither agree nor disagree	40 (159)	9 (55)	21 (57)
Disagree	17 (68)	7 (39)	3 (9)
Strongly disagree	5 (21)	1 (3)	1 (4)
<i>31. + I do paid or unpaid work or activities that give me a role in life</i>			
Strongly agree	8 (30)	13 (79)	9 (23) ****
Agree	18 (71)	22 (128)	18 (47)
Neither agree nor disagree	32 (128)	9 (52)	16 (42)
Disagree	30 (121)	41 (239)	42 (113)
Strongly disagree	12 (50)	15 (85)	16 (44)

8. Religion/culture:			
<i>Aic. ± + Religion, belief or philosophy is important to my QoL</i>			
Strongly agree	11 (45)	18 (106)**	n/a
Agree	47 (187)	37 (216)	
Neither agree nor disagree	23 (92)	21 (125)	
Disagree	16 (65)	18 (105)	
Strongly disagree	3 (11)	6 (35)	
<i>Aid. ± + Cultural /religious events/festivals are important to my QoL</i>			
Strongly agree	13 (51)	12 (72)ns	n/a
Agree	51 (205)	29 (169)	
Neither agree nor disagree	23 (93)	23 (135)	
Disagree	11 (42)	30 (174)	
Strongly disagree	2 (9)	6 (37)	
No. of respondents [item non-response]	400 <i>[item non-response 0%]</i>	585-587 <i>[Ø 577 for financial item # 26; other item non-response: <1%]</i>	269-286 <i>[item non-response 5-10% (+1 item only=11%)]</i>

+ Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

+/-OPQOL: reverse coding of positively worded items + (5-1) so higher scores represented higher QoL

ns not statistically significant at least at p<0.05 level

**** $p < 0.01$**

****** $p < 0.0001$**

± Additional items inserted in Ethnibus and ONS Omnibus Surveys recommended by Ethnibus focus group members and refined with Ethnibus staff (QoL follow-up questionnaires had already been mailed out and did not include these additional items)

± Ethnibus feedback from interviewers: item 6 QOL is based on physical, psychological and emotional pain due to family and domestic issues. This is a cultural interpretation of the word “pain”.

Development of the OPQOL

The OPQOL was developed and tested with ESRC and cross-research council funding. It is a 32- to 35- item QoL measure. It was conceptually grounded in lay views from the baseline QoL ONS Omnibus Surveys. It has 5-point Likert scales from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, with 32 or 35 items, representing: life overall (4 items), health (4 items), social relationships and participation (7 items in QoL follow-up survey, 8 items in Omnibus surveys), independence, control over life, freedom (5 items), area: home and neighbourhood (4 items), psychological and emotional well-being (4 items), financial circumstances (4 items), religion/culture (2 items; asked in Omnibus surveys only). Items are scored (with reverse coding of positive responses, so that higher scores equal higher QoL; the scale ranges are 35 (QoL so bad could not be worse) to 175 (QoL so good could not be better) (Omnibus surveys) and, correspondingly 32 to 160 in the QoL follow-up survey.

In the development of the OPQOL, older people's responses to open-ended questioning about the 'good things' that gave life quality were examined. These were categorised into main themes by two researchers, independently. These were, in order of magnitude: social relationships (mentioned by 81%), social roles and activities (60%), solo activities (48%), health (44%), psychological outlook and well-being (38%), home and neighbourhood (37%), financial circumstances (33%), and independence (27%). Smaller numbers mentioned various other things. These responses were consistent with older people's views about what took quality away from life. The sub-scale domains in the OPQOL reflected this common core of main constituents of quality of life. The common sub-themes are listed in (Bowling 2007). The pool of *actual verbatim responses* was examined next by two researchers, again independently, to inform the inclusion of the items within each sub-scale. The main *reasons* given by people, at survey and in-depth interview, to explain the importance of these themes to their QoL were categorized, by two independent coders, as: freedom to do the things they wanted to do without restriction (whether in the home or socially); pleasure, enjoyment and satisfaction with life; mental harmony; social attachment - having access to companionship, intimacy, love, social contact and involvement, help; social roles; and feeling secure. These cut across the main themes (Bowling & Gabriel, 2007). The responses which were selected for inclusion in OPQOL represented the most commonly occurring sub-themes within each theme.

The verbatim responses formed an initial pool of over 100 different statements, or attitudes. After reading and comparing the items, overlapping statements were deleted to leave 51 items. The revised items were first mailed to QoL Survey sample members in 2006 and 60% 179 of the respondents invited to participate returned the completed questionnaires). They were asked to complete the items, report any difficulties they had with it, and to make any other comments about it.

Psychometric tests for item redundancy, reliability and validity, led to the removal of redundant items (over-high correlations), items with high missing data, items where the Cronbach's alpha of the scale improved with their removal, items which did not correlate with the overall scale score or a self-rated global QoL item. Exploratory factor analysis was used to explore the dimensions underlying the questionnaire. Amendments to wording were made following feedback from survey respondents and an opportunistic focus group of eight consenting people aged 65+ whose role locally was to provide feedback on research and services (seven of whom were white). This resulted in a reduced 32-item, multi-dimensional QoL questionnaire, with the methodological advantage that it separates constituents of QoL from QoL end states. The questionnaire was further assessed for interpretation, face and content validity with four focus groups of older people, three of which reflected ethnic diversity, and were organised by Ethnibus's focus group arm before the Ethnibus and ONS Omnibus waves commenced (<http://www.ethnifocus.com>).

The OPQOL is copyrighted © Ann Bowling, and is made available free of use with acknowledgement by referencing the initial papers reporting its validity and reliability (these are in red below).

The report of this research: 'Good Neighbours' can be downloaded from the International Longevity Centre – UK website in summary and in full. Also available for download is the questionnaire used in the research (links below valid May 2011).

Good Neighbours Findings: http://www.ilcuk.org.uk/files/pdf_pdf_159.pdf

Good Neighbours Summary: http://www.ilcuk.org.uk/files/pdf_pdf_162.pdf

Questionnaire: http://www.ilcuk.org.uk/files/pdf_pdf_161.pdf

Further reading on the OPQOL questionnaire

Bowling, A. (2009). Psychometric properties of the Older People's Quality of Life Questionnaire Validity. *Current Gerontology and Geriatrics Research*. www.hindawi.com/journals/cggr/2009/298950.abs.html

Bowling, A. Iliffe, S., Kessel, A., Higginson, I. (2010). Fear of dying in an ethnically diverse society: cross-sectional studies of people aged 65+ in Britain. *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 86: 197-202. www.pmj.bmj.com/content/86/1014/197.full

Bowling, A. and Stenner, P. (2010). Psychometric properties of the Older People's Quality of Life Questionnaire: which measure performs best with older people. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*.

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Bilotta, C., Bowling, A., Casè, A., Nicolini, P., Mauri, S., Castelli, M., & Vergani, C.(2010). Dimensions and correlates of quality of life according to frailty status: a cross-sectional study on community-dwelling older adults referred to an outpatient geriatric service in Italy. *Health & Quality of Life Outcomes*, 8, 56.
www.hqlo.com/content/8/1/56