

THE MEANING OF QOL 3 IN IPSS/QOL QUESTIONNAIRE: ARE PATIENTS SATISFIED OR UNSATISFIED?Hypothesis / aims of study

The description of quality of life(QoL) score 3 in IPSS/QoL questionnaire is 'Mixed about equally satisfied and unsatisfied'. In clinical practice, many patients check in the box under QoL 3 because they feel their voiding status not 'exactly' but 'about' equally satisfied and unsatisfied. QoL 3. Since the description of QoL 2 is 'mostly satisfied', most of 'a little satisfied' patients would check QoL 3. In the same way, 'a little dissatisfied' patients would check QoL 3 also. The point of QoL 3 in the satisfaction scale may be possibly located at the midline but more likely be located either somewhere in the satisfied side or unsatisfied side. Although it depends upon individual conditions or preferences, a gross tendency may exist. We investigated to find the tendency using the statistical technique of homogeneous subset analysis.

Study design, materials and methods

All male patients over 50 of age who visited our urology clinic for the first time during 1 months were recruited and asked to fill up IPSS/QoL questionnaires. Exclusion criteria were: (1) impaired cognitive function, (2) suspected neurogenic etiology, (3) previous experience of answering IPSS/QoL, (4) urinary tract infection, and (5) painful conditions such as urolithiasis. All IPSS/QoL data were grouped by QoL scores. Homogeneous subset analysis was done with each IPSS items and analyzed by QoL score groups. Additionally, subset analysis was done with QoL score subgroups defined as QoLsat (QoL 1,2), QoL 3, and QoLunsat (QoL 4,5). SPSS 11.0 software package was used for the statistical analysis.

Results

Overall, 156 patients were included in this study. The number of patients in each QoL group were 20 (QoL 1), 16 (QoL 2), 45 (QoL 3), 45 (QoL 4), and 30 (QoL 5). Homogeneous subset analysis by QoL groups showed that QoL 3 group had homogeneities with QoL 2 group in incomplete emptying, frequency, urgency and weak stream (Scheffe method, subset for alpha=0.05). Only in intermittency, QoL 3 group had a homogeneity with QoL 4 group. In straining and nocturia, QoL 3 group had homogeneities with both QoL 2 and QoL 4 groups. In total IPSS score, QoL 3 group had a homogeneity only with QoL 2 group. In subset analysis, QoL 3 group had homogeneities with QoLsat in frequency and nocturia. With QoLunsat, QoL 3 group had no homogeneity in any IPSS items.

Interpretation of results

In 6 out of 7 items of IPSS and total IPSS score, QoL 3 group had homogeneous characteristics with QoL 2 group. In 4 IPSS items, QoL 3 group had more homogeneous with QoL 2 than with QoL 4 group. Therefore, if a patient responds his LUT status as QoL 3, his QoL condition may have more chance to be located in satisfied side than in dissatisfied side.

Concluding message

From the results of this study, we may cautiously regard QoL 3 as more satisfactory than exact midline or unsatisfactory condition.

Specify source of funding or grant	None
Is this a clinical trial?	No
What were the subjects in the study?	HUMAN
Was this study approved by an ethics committee?	No
This study did not require ethics committee approval because	this study would make no potential ethical problem to the patients. We had explained the patients the purpose of this study and got informed consent from them.
Was the Declaration of Helsinki followed?	Yes
Was informed consent obtained from the patients?	Yes