



Exploring the Concept of Quality of Life among Children Living in Contexts of Vulnerability

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Introduction and Context

- QoL remains a complex construct with no unique definition or conceptualisation
- QoL relates to the culture and value system of individuals, their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns” (WHO, 2012)
- In children, QoL must include the interaction between the child, his family and the community (Lou & al, 2008).
- Most QoL tools assess QoL from a health/disease perspective and were validated among children living in developed countries
 - Humanity Inclusive (HI) partnered with UdeM to develop a QoL measure for children, regardless of their gender, age or disability status and growing up in contexts of vulnerability

Methods

- 16 Focus groups (FG) were conducted with children and parents recruited by HI teams
 - Burmese refugee camps (Thailand – Tak provinces)
 - Slum in Dhaka Bangladesh and rural community outside Dhaka
- Consent was obtained for all participants



Methods

- Interview guide adapted to children and use of translator
- Pictures were used as prompts to facilitate expression of feelings
- The FG guide was developed on the basis of key QoL of dimensions (physical, psychological, social) and Maslow's hierarchy of needs
 - What makes you happy?
 - What does school means to you?
 - How do you think this boy is feeling?
- Thematic analyses of verbatims using QDA-Miner



Results

➤ Participants

- 38 children in Thailand (60% were girls) 6-7/9-10/15-16 years
- 49 children in Bangladesh (72% were girls) 6-7/10-11/13-16 years
- < 10 % with some form of disability
- 19 parents in Bangladesh (63% were women)
- 14 parents in Thailand (93% were women)



Results

QUALITY OF LIFE

Emotional

- Being listened to
- Being appreciated
- Having confidence
- Feeling equal to others
- Feeling happy/sad
- Feeling useful
- Feeling hopeful
- Being optimistic

Social

- Belonging to a group
- Living in loving environment
- Having social/family support
- Taking meals with family
- Having friends

Physical

- Doing activities other kids do
- Feeling healthy
- Having enough food

Realization/ autonomy

- Learning new skills/knowledge
- Going to school
- Making own decisions
- Balance between play and work

Safety

- Feeling safe outside
- Feeling safe at home

Discussion

- Friendship, feeling valued/useful, going to school, spending time with parents were strong themes across all children groups
- Parents were most concerned with safety issues of their children and fulfilling basic needs
- Optimism, being hopeful about reaching goals was an issue from the parents perspective not for children
- Gender issues were detected on safety and learning new skills/knowledge across countries
- Conducting FG with a translator was seen as a limit of the study

Conclusion

- Our study supports that culture and context influence how key QoL domains are expressed
- A 20-item instrument based on the 5 key domains will be tested to confirm the conceptualisation of QoL for children living in vulnerable environments and to further develop the psychometric properties of the tool

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