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Physical Activity Level and Health-Related Quality of Life: A Systematic Review

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Background

- Physical activity (PA) is effective in preventing many diseases
- PA ←→ Quality of Life (HRQL) ??
- If more PA ←→ better HRQL:
  - It could constitute a good motivational tool

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Objective

- Make a systematic review of the literature about:
  - PA ←→ Quality of Life
  - Among apparently healthy subjects
  - From the general adult population

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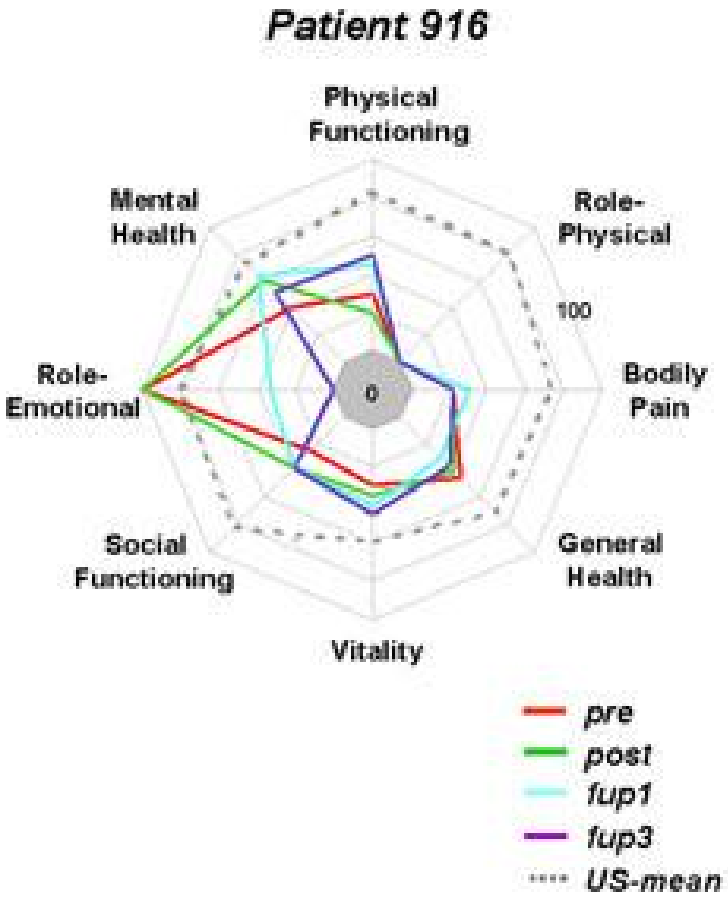
How HRQL can be assessed?



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Methods

- We systematically searched:
  - MEDLINE
  - EMBASE
  - CINAHL
  - PsycINFO
  - Web of Science
- All references were screened by two independent assessors
- Assessed in full text if retained by at least one of the reviewers

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Results

- 1426 retrieved references
- 53 citations were judged to require further evaluation
- 13 studies were retained for data extraction and analysis
  - Seven were cross-sectional studies
  - Five were longitudinal studies
  - One combined both approaches

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Results (continued)

- Thirteen different methods of PA assessment were used !!!
  - Two studies used fitness level as an outcome (= indirect indicator of PA)
- Most HRQL instruments related to the Medical Outcomes Study (MOS) **SF-36 questionnaire**

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Results (continued)

- Cross-sectional studies showed a **consistently positive correlation** between self-reported PA and HRQL
  - Adjusted OR of “having 14 or more unhealthy days” during the previous month (n=175’850):

    0.40 (95% Confidence Interval 0.36 to 0.45)

    … for those meeting recommended levels of PA compared to inactive individuals

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Results (continued)

- Longitudinal studies tended to show a positive effect of PA on HRQL
  - limited methodological quality
  - the following question is still open:
    - more PA → better HRQL ?
      - OR
    - better HRQL → more PA?
      - OR
    - better HRQL ←→ more PA?
      - OR
    - Factor “X” → both more PA and better HRQL?

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Conclusions

- Cross-sectional data showed a **consistently positive correlation** between PA level and HRQL
- The questionable validity of PA measures is a concern
- No definitive statement about the nature of this association