



Enhancing Quality Of Life For Individuals With Disabilities: Key Indicators And Guidelines

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ABSTRACT

Quality of life is a multidimensional concept increasingly addressed in disability policy and services. Understanding key indicators informs supportive program development. This study aimed to identify quality of life domains and assessment considerations for individuals with disabilities based on a review of literature. Health, education, infrastructure, technology and social factors emerged as primary quality of life domains addressed. Participatory research inclusive of disability populations is recommended. Assessment should consider dynamic interactions between personal circumstances and environments over time. Continued examination of initiatives' impacts across sectors through inclusive research can guide optimized supports and benchmark setting aligned with evolving standards. Partnerships promoting disability rights through lifespan approaches maximize independence, participation and self-determination.

Keywords: Quality of life, disability, indicators, assessment, inclusion

Introduction

The concept of quality of life has received significant attention in the field of general psychology, where the term "quality of life" is considered one of the most modern concepts. It has emerged as a key specialization in motivational psychology (positive psychology), serving as a platform for investing in individuals' strengths and potentials to foster positive behaviors that lead to personal growth aligned with standards of positive mental health. This underscores the importance of personal and societal growth (Mansouri and Babakhani, 2023; Manouchehri, 2023).

It is evident that all societies have a category of prominent individuals who bear varying degrees of responsibility for the challenges individuals face in their daily lives. Often, individuals with disabilities struggle with emotional adjustment issues, leading to ineffective self-concepts, low self-confidence, and feelings of fear. Their lack of belief in themselves and feelings of shame stem from concerns about societal perceptions, prompting them to seek inclusion and acquire skills that foster independence and responsibility (Harriman and Oyefeso, 2022).

The satisfaction or lack thereof an individual feels within their community or family significantly impacts their perception of quality of life. Individuals with disabilities aspire to be recognized as integral members of society, yearning for independence, normalcy in treatment, social relationships, and the opportunity to form families. These factors collectively shape their quality of life perceptions (Asiri et al., 2023; Barcaccia et al., 2013).

When discussing quality of life, particular emphasis is often placed on a person's psychological well-being. The psychological state of an individual plays a crucial role in meeting their essential needs. Any challenges or obstacles faced by people with disabilities can significantly complicate their lives, prompting researchers to reassess the care provided to such individuals and enhance the efficiency of services offered to them (Hoff, 2002; Isa et al., 2016).

The concept of quality of life aims to provide the best outcomes for people with disabilities across domains of health, physical function, and psychosocial well-being. This includes establishing an environment conducive

to development through cleanliness, appropriateness of facilities, and ensuring basic physical needs as well as emotional and material provisions are met. Additional factors that contribute to quality of life are satisfaction with life circumstances, development of a positive self-concept, enhancing subjective well-being and enjoyment, and improving social and environmental conditions (Blunden, 2021).

Satisfying needs through appropriate services such as education, accessibility supports, healthcare, opportunities for social integration, and promotion of acceptance are also important (Brown et al., 2003; Erez and Gal, 2020). One priority for families is developing disabled person's adaptive and pro-social behaviors to better cope with challenges and foster independence. This involves building self-confidence, responsibility through task assignments, and social-communication skills to interact effectively with relatives, friends and the broader community (Albertini, 2004; Hayli et al. 2023; Bertelli et al., 2020).

Achieving these goals involves understanding each special person's needs and perspectives on life satisfiers, recognizing their preferences and ways of engagement, ensuring opportunities for enjoyment and participation, and strengthening social integration. Quality of life is realized through sensitivity to individual circumstances and the interface between personal and environmental factors. It also balances objective and subjective standards of well-being by minimizing discordance between opportunities afforded versus actual life achievements (Brown and Brown, 2003; Bertelli et al., 2020).

Quality Of Life in Disability Care: The Saudi Experience

The government of Saudi Arabia provides a range of quality services to support people with disabilities and promote inclusion. Health programs offer comprehensive medical care and rehabilitation tailored to disability type, severity and prevalence. The Ministry of Education established a special education department in 1377H (1957CE) to provide classes for visually impaired students, later transforming into special schools. Several universities now offer special education departments and rehabilitation training programs.

For nearly two decades, the conceptualization of disability services has evolved to emphasize indicators of quality of life. This includes providing specialized learning resources in schools, developing accessible infrastructure, and adopting universal design principles. Vocational training opportunities aim to guarantee independence and social integration through career options matched to abilities and potentials. Medical, social, psychological, educational and career services collaborate to maximize functional capacity and ability to navigate natural and social environments. The ultimate goals are to facilitate self-reliance, productivity and full participation in society according to individual capabilities (Gushgari, 2020; Mushta et al., 2021).

The kingdom strives to enable persons with disabilities through appropriate education and job opportunities. All supports and facilities aim to realize success while investing personal strengths for community benefit. Diversified vocational fields cater to varying needs and abilities. Combined services assist disability inclusion and community adaptation and development of life skills.

Quality Of Life Indicators for People with Disabilities

Health-related quality of life indicators for people with disabilities

Access to competent healthcare services across the disability continuum is paramount. This includes specialized therapeutic, rehabilitative and psychosocial services (Bullinger et al., 2002; Raphael et al., 1996). Targeted drug regimens, physical rehabilitation modalities and regular follow-up support maximal functioning.

Common psychological issues for people with disabilities include anxiety, depression and reduced well-being arising from social isolation, perceived inferiority and helplessness. Comprehensive treatment involving pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy and behavioral interventions is often required. Access to psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers can facilitate psychological adjustment, social integration, strengthened self-concept and enhanced quality of life (Vazquez et al., 2015).

Self-management activities like personal healthcare, participation in adapted physical activities and development of leisure pursuits, stress-coping mechanisms and cultural identity additionally promote mental health and overall wellness (Vazquez et al., 2015).

Education-focused quality of life indicators

Access to inclusive learning aligned with abilities is a fundamental right. Appropriate educational environments comprise universally accessible infrastructure like schools, libraries and technology labs (Schalock, 2004).

State-of-the-art assistive technologies and specialized learning resources facilitate the educational process according to disability profiles. This helps ensure equitable education and achievement outcomes versus non-disabled peers (Algarni, 2015; Verdugo et al., 2012; Keles et al., 2007).

Infrastructure and transportation quality of life indicators

People with disabilities require universally accessible infrastructure. This includes buildings, public facilities and housing adapted according to need (Aeknarajindawut, 2022; Cumella, 2008).

Transportation services and public spaces must also be made fully accessible per international standards. Provisions like specialized vehicles, priority parking and wayfinding signs ensure independent community engagement (Aeknarajindawut, 2022; Cumella, 2008).

Technology integration quality of life indicators

Access to assistive technologies promotes equitable education, employment, socialization and independent living skills among those with disabilities (Matthews et al., 2010; Lotan and Icht, 2023).

Targeted technologies and applications help overcome barriers to digital participation. This is especially important for skill-building in youth. Technology thus empowers people with disabilities to manage daily responsibilities and connect with support systems (Matthews et al., 2010; Lotan and Icht, 2023). Overall, universal infrastructure design, accessible transportation options and technology integration are vital enablers of community participation and quality of life for vulnerable populations. Strategic planning and investment in these areas can significantly improve disability inclusion outcomes.

Quality Of Life Measurement Indicators for Individuals with Disabilities

The research on quality-of-life indicators for individuals with disabilities focuses on various indicators that reflect different aspects of life domains. These indicators are essential for measuring the quality of life in individuals with intellectual disabilities, encompassing both subjective and objective methods of measurement. The research emphasizes the importance of utilizing a combination of subjective and objective indicators to comprehensively assess the quality of life in individuals with disabilities. Additionally, it highlights the significance of considering indicators that are unique to individuals to enhance their development and improve the effectiveness of policies and programs aimed at supporting them (Brown et al., 2013; Erez and Gal, 2019).

Quality of life measurement in intellectual disability involves a variety of indicators grouped under different life domains, combining subjective and objective methods for a comprehensive assessment (Brown et al., 2013). Understanding these indicators is crucial for evaluating the quality of life in individuals with disabilities and tailoring interventions to enhance their well-being. Below is a small description of these indicators.

Psychological indicators

Psychological indicators involve feelings of anxiety or depression in individuals with disabilities and their ability to cope with their condition (Viemerö and Krause, 1998).

Physical indicator

Physical indicators emphasize the importance of satisfaction with health, physical abilities, pain management, sleep, and appetite (Viemerö and Krause, 1998).

Professional indicators

Professional indicators relate to the individual's satisfaction with tasks, ease of completing them, and efficiency. Factors like occupation, social integration, and finding meaning in life significantly impact the quality of life for individuals with physical disabilities (Viemerö and Krause, 1998).

Apart from above mentioned indicators the length of time since the onset of disability can influence satisfaction levels (Viemerö and Krause, 1998).

Ways to Improve Quality Of Life for Individuals With Disabilities

Improving the quality of life for people with disabilities involves various aspects. Ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive education in inclusive environments with their peers without disabilities is crucial for their development and social integration (Viemerö and Krause, 1998). Enhancing accessibility in public places, buildings, and transportation systems is essential to enable people with disabilities to move freely and independently. Providing affordable and accessible health care services tailored to meet the specific health needs of individuals with disabilities is vital for their well-being (Fulmer et al., 2021). Creating job opportunities and offering vocational training for people with disabilities can enhance their employability and independence. Encouraging social inclusion and providing support to reduce social isolation plays a significant role in enhancing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities (Henry et al., 2014). Providing technology and assistive devices can help individuals with disabilities perform daily tasks more easily, improving their independence (Leopold et al., 2015). Ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy equal legal rights and protection from discrimination is fundamental for their well-being (Krishnamoorthi et al., 2024). Providing emotional, financial, and practical support to families caring for individuals with disabilities is crucial for overall quality of life. Encouraging research and innovation to develop new treatments, interventions, and technologies can significantly improve the lives of people with disabilities. Promoting cooperation between governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector is essential to develop comprehensive policies and programs that cater to the needs of people with disabilities (Brown and Brown, 2007).

Conclusion

This study examined key quality of life indicators and considerations for enhancing the lives of people with disabilities based on a review of research literature. Health, education, infrastructure, technology and social factors were identified as primary domains. Saudi Arabia has implemented supportive programs but could strengthening assessment and align with international standards.

Quality of life is shaped by both objective environmental conditions and subjective perceptions that change over time. Measurement approaches must account for these dynamic interactions. Including people with

disabilities in research ensures comprehensively evaluating outcomes and indicators uniquely relevant to disability populations.

Examinations of initiatives' impacts can optimize programming and resource allocation. Partnerships across sectors will promote inclusive disability rights through lifespan approaches. Prioritizing strategies maximizing independence, participation and self-determination aligns with quality of life philosophies. Continued exploration of this evolving concept with diverse perspectives can establish benchmarks promoting well-being, involvement and fulfillment globally.

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Conflict of Interest

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Authors' Contributions

Yasir A. Alsamiri conceived and designed the study, performed the literature search and analysis, and wrote the initial draft of the manuscript. Omar Abdullah Alsamani assisted with the literature search and analysis. Abdulrahman Ahmed Al bulayhi helped with literature sourcing and review. Ibraheem Mohamed Alsawalem aided with literature review and manuscript formatting. Abdulrahim Ajyan Alsenani contributed to analysis and interpretation of literature. Mansour Mosleh Aljohani provided support in manuscript development. Abdulrahman Bin Ali Bin Abdullah alduaylij assisted with editing and revision of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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