

LETTER TO THE LANCET

Dear Sir

The calculated Q in QALY is Nonsense

The Q is calculated from a survey where respondents are asked to rate five different dimensions of health (mobility, self-care, usual activities, pain/ discomfort and anxiety/depression) either at three levels (no problems, some problems, extreme problems) constituting the EQ5D-3L or five levels (no problems, slight problems, moderate problems, severe problems, extreme problems /unable to) constituting the EQ5D-5L.

Over the last 5-10years, EUROQOL groups have obtained ratings from about 20 country samples of respondents – usually about 1,000 – are then averaged to provide a ‘value’ for each of the five Dimensions. The word value has been put in inverted commas because the five levels do not constitute a cardinal number – they are an ordinal scale; it is strictly meaningless to average ordinal numbers. The Q is therefore also meaningless.

Yours sincerely

Roy CARR-HILL