

Summary of pre-test results for WG short set of questions: COMMUNICATION

Introductory phrase:

The next questions ask about difficulties you may have doing certain activities because of a HEALTH PROBLEM.

Question on communicating

Because of a physical, mental or emotional health condition, do you have difficulty communicating, (for example understanding others or others understanding you)?

- a. No – no difficulty
- b. Yes – some difficulty
- c. Yes – a lot of difficulty
- d. Cannot do at all

Summary of pre-test results:

In the cognitive tests, only 85 of the cases (out of 1165) fell into the “problematic” group of response patterns for the communication question. The majority (n=58) of problematic responses were in pattern “n” where respondents answered “yes” to the WG question and “no” to all of the extended questions¹. This was interpreted as a problem due to respondent’s focus on the introductory phrase of the WG question (“Because of a physical, mental, or emotional health condition...”). Examination of responses to cognitive probes revealed that respondents understood the WG question and that for problematic responses, respondents either focused on the introductory phrase, found the question ambiguous, or had a second language problem (i.e. had communication problems because primary language in country was not their native language). At least one of the extended questions captures a concept that is somewhat different than the ability to communicate (it asks whether respondents feel shy in a group or social situations). This extended question was interpreted in a number of different ways by respondents and some of the discordance in responses between the WG question and the extended question was due to this conceptual difference. It was noted that it is important consider the respondent’s hearing along with communication because some people reported no communication problem but had hearing problems.

WHO/ESCAP results indicated low sensitivity and high specificity of the WG question compared to the extended questions. The rates of endorsement for the extended questions were higher than that of the WG question. It was reiterated that the results of sensitivity and specificity analyses need to be interpreted with caution since there is no gold standard. Since the extended questions have a 5 point response scale and the WG questions have a 4 point scale, the cut-point was reset and preliminary analyses were repeated for this question at the time of the annual meeting. The agreement was better when the cut-points were reset so that more comparable comparisons could be made. The WG question was moderately correlated with the two extended questions that were closely related conceptually to the WG question (difficulty

¹ Extended questions: (i) *Do you feel shy in a group or social situations?* (ii) *Do you have difficulty in making new friends?* (iii) *in stating and maintaining a conversation?* (iv) *in generally understanding what people say?*

understanding what people say and difficulty starting and maintaining a conversation). It was felt that the complicated phrasing (introductory phrase) of the WG question caused some problems for the respondents which may have contributed to lower correspondence between the WG question and the extended questions.

Generally, the WG question was well understood, however the introductory phrase was found to be misleading. The question was long and interviewers had to repeat the question to respondents. There were few (but some) instances where respondents answered affirmatively because of a second language problem. Concern was expressed that if the introductory phrase is removed, we might create more false positive responses because of second language problems. Therefore, it was recommended to omit the introductory phrase and to move it to the beginning of the entire question set. It was also recommended to add a reference to communicating in one's normal language to avoid false positive responses due to second language problems.