

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

Introductory phrase:

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

Question on cognition

Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?

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

Summary of pre-test results:

Cognitive test results were reviewed and the issue was raised that memory and concentration represent only a small part of mental functioning, but within these specified aspects of mental functioning, the WG question was well understood by respondents. Reported difficulties were usually in reference to those experienced at work or school. Since respondents may report a little difficulty in concentrating or remembering because of being overly busy or stressed, it was suggested that a meaningful distinction in functioning is between those reporting no difficulty or some difficulty versus those reporting a lot of difficulty or inability to remember or concentrate. This operationalization was used as an outcome variable in multiple logistic regression analyses. In adjusted analyses, key concepts that were independently related to the degree of difficulty reported on the WG question included the degree of effort required to remember/concentrate, how worried respondents were about their memory/concentration, difficulty remembering names, and difficulty problem solving. The need to evaluate the results of the proxy data were emphasized since respondents with severe cognitive problems may have had a proxy respondent reporting for them.

Field test results indicated that the WG question identified almost as many respondents as the 3 extended questions¹ identified in combination. There was poor correspondence between the WG question and extended questions^{1,2} that capture different aspects of mental functioning such as learning a new task and finding solutions to problems in everyday life. However, correspondence was very good between the WG question and extended questions that capture similar aspects of mental functioning (i.e. remembering and concentrating). This was interpreted as a limitation in the aspects of mental functioning captured by the WG question, but not a problem with the question itself. It was emphasized that we have to be really clear about the

¹ Three extended questions: *Do you have difficulty* (i) *concentrating on doing something for 10 minutes?* (ii) *learning a new task, for example, learning how to get to a new place?* (iii) *finding solutions to problems in day to day life?*

² Additional extended questions: *Do you have difficulty* (iv) *remembering the names of people or places?* (v) *remembering appointments?* (vi) *remembering how to get to familiar places?* (vii) *remembering important tasks, like taking medications or paying bills?*

issue of who we are missing with the WG questions. It was suggested that at some point in the future, we may need to add another question to identify children with cognitive problems (such as learning problems) and those with intellectual functioning problems (mental retardation).

Overall for the cognitive tests, only 82 of the cases (out of 920) fell into the “problematic” group of response patterns for the cognitive question. The WG question on cognition was well understood by respondents, captured the intended aspects of mental functioning (i.e. remembering and concentrating), and the WG question correlated well with questions on related concepts. There were no recommendations for revision of this question.