

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

Introductory phrase:

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

Question on hearing

Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?

- 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 37 of the cases (out of 877) fell into the “problematic” group of response patterns for the hearing question. When the difficulty and effort questions¹ were taken into account (see related comment on vision question), only 21 out of 877 remained in the “problematic” group of response patterns. Fourteen respondents did not report difficulty on the WG question, but reported difficulty on the extended questions² or reported they missed words³. Most of these respondents reported only minimal difficulty on the extended questions suggesting that they may not consider their impairment to be serious enough to report in the general WG core question. Five of these respondents reported use of a hearing aid which may have improved hearing overall so that no difficulty was reported for the WG questions, but specific problems as captured by the extended set may persist. Two respondents reported difficulty on the WG question but did not report problems on the extended questions or missed words. Most of these respondents reported “some difficulty” hearing.

WHO/ESCAP results indicated low sensitivity of the WG question compared to the extended questions. Again, the three issues confounding the comparison of responses were raised: the extended questions refer to a health problem lasting 30 days while the WG question has no reference to duration; the WG question asks about the quantity of the problem while the extended questions ask about severity; and finally, the extended questions have a 5 point response scale versus a 4 point scale for the WG questions. It was reiterated that the results of sensitivity and specificity analyses need to be interpreted with caution since there is no gold standard and to reset the cut point and re-analyze the data from the WHO/ESCAP test.

¹ Difficulty and effort questions: *Without / With your hearing aid, (i) how often do you have difficulty hearing well? (ii) how much effort do you have to put into hearing?*

² Extended questions: (i) *Do you wear a hearing aid all of the time, only for certain activities, or none of the time? With / Without your hearing aid, (ii) do you have difficulty hearing what is said in a conversation with one other person in a crowded room? (iii) do you have difficulty hearing what is said in a conversation with one other person in a quiet room?*

³ Missed words: (i) *How often do you miss words in conversation or on the radio or television because you have difficulty hearing? (ii) Do household or family members often tell you that you have a hearing problem?*

Similar to the question on vision, the WG question on hearing was interpreted consistently across countries. Since the proportion of problematic responses was quite low, there were no suggestions for revision of this question.