

Correspondence

Reply

To the Editor:

We thank Drs Apfelbacher and Smith¹ for their correspondence concerning the recommendations of the Quality of Life Subcommittee of the 2010 Asthma Outcomes Workshop.² Their correspondence and their previously published review of available instruments that aim to assess the effect of asthma on a patient's quality of life³ agree with the subcommittee's conclusion that the available instruments that ostensibly measure "asthma-related quality of life" are actually measuring functional status, asthma symptoms, and, to a lesser extent, emotional/mood states. The writers and workshop recommendations also agree on the urgent need to develop instruments that truly and adequately measure quality of life, specifically the patient's perception of the effect asthma has on his or her quality of life.

However, the workshop subcommittee went substantially further in concluding that the available instruments are simply not measuring the patient's perception of the effect of asthma on quality of life. The 1999 analysis of Anderson and Burckhardt⁴ came to a similar conclusion with regard to all so-called "disease-specific" quality-of-life measurement instruments.

Notably, the workshop subcommittee concluded that even instruments that focus on measuring functional status, emotional well-being, or both do not adequately measure the intended construct of quality of life. For that reason, the subcommittee purposely eschewed prioritizing existing measures or recommending criteria for selecting among existing instruments as substitutes or placeholders until adequate instruments can be developed. Instead, it provided a table that describes what is

actually being measured by the various instruments that purport to measure asthma-related quality of life and the psychometric data that are available to support their use for the purpose of measuring what they actually measure. It is hoped that researchers will find this table helpful for identifying instruments the content of which, as well as the development process, psychometric properties, and other relevant characteristics of which, are appropriate to their research aims and to the population they are studying.

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