

Testing verifies new 'Quality of Life' tool

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Recognizing the urgent need for contemporary and comprehensive indicators of quality in aged care in Australia, a new type of 'Quality of Life' (QOL) assessment tool developed by Flinders University has been put to the test and passed with flying colors.

The Flinders-designed QOL-ACC (Quality of Life-Aged Care Consumers) [tool](#) was created from the perspectives of older Australians accessing [aged care](#) services in both home and residential care settings and is designed as a preference-based instrument for quality assessment and economic evaluation.

The tool assesses six key quality of life dimensions including mobility, [pain management](#), emotional well-being, independence, [social connections](#), and activities.

The QOL-ACC has been implemented with more than 1000 older Australians to date in home and residential care settings, to deliver an improved set of standards and provide transparency in aged care quality.

Now, the federal Department of Health has assessed QOL-ACC and another Flinders tool QCE-ACC (Quality of Care Experience- Aged Care Consumers) for its new aged care quality indicators program.

Consultancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers tested both the Flinders tools in a six-week pilot trial which concluded in April, measuring indicators across quality-of-care domains covering Consumer Experience and Quality of Life (CEQOL), in a nationally representative sample of

residential aged care services. Initial feedback indicates both tools performed strongly, with the results expected to be published in the near future.

At the same time, an analysis paper has just been published by the journal *Quality of Life Research*, highlighting the effectiveness of QOL-ACC in achieving its desired outcomes.

Professor in Health Economics Julie Ratcliffe says it's clear that society expects older Australians to be properly cared for, treated with dignity, and supported to enjoy a good quality of life—and an effective tool for measuring that is vital.

'Many of the long-established QOL tools are no longer addressing all contemporary needs. Yet, some assessments of the effectiveness of QOL tools remain focused on traditional measures and give weighting to long-established tools.

'It's therefore pleasing that we're beginning to see more progressive approaches to valuing contemporary tools that are helping to foster improvements in care too,' Professor Ratcliffe says.

'Our newly developed tools not only measure what the current experience of life is for [older people](#) but are also a catalyst for driving improved health and well-being outcomes, including through modern technologies such as digital and virtual supports.

'We're pleased that the transparency, versatility and effectiveness of these tools are being increasingly recognized through analysis such as the PWC pilot,' she says.

The article shows the results of assessing more than 300 people aged over 65 years who are receiving community aged care; 54.6% were

female, 41.8% were living alone and 56.8% were receiving higher-level care.

Respondents with poorer self-reported [health status](#), [quality of life](#) and/or higher-level care needs demonstrated lower QOL-ACC scores.

Professor Ratcliffe says the new study provides further evidence of the construct validity of the QOL-ACC descriptive system.

More information: J. Khadka et al, Assessing the construct validity of the Quality-of-Life-Aged Care Consumers (QOL-ACC): an aged care-specific quality-of-life measure, *Quality of Life Research* (2022). [DOI: 10.1007/s11136-022-03142-x](#)

Provided by Flinders University

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