

REVIEW

Evaluation of Health-Related Quality of Life in Villa Piletones: A Public Health Approach

Evaluación de la Calidad de Vida Relacionada con la Salud en Villa Piletones: Un Enfoque desde la Salud Pública

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Cite as: Magalhaes de Paiva EM, Manuel Correa FJ. Evaluation of Health-Related Quality of Life in Villa Piletones: A Public Health Approach. South Health and Policy. 2025; 4:217. <https://doi.org/10.56294/shp2025217>

Submitted: 30-05-2024

Revised: 09-10-2024

Accepted: 19-03-2025

Published: 20-03-2025

Editor: Dr. Telmo Raúl Aveiro-Róbalo 

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ABSTRACT

The study addressed Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) as an essential component in the evaluation of the physical, mental and social well-being of the population. It focused on the community of Villa Piletones, with the aim of diagnosing its health situation and guiding public policies. Through the use of the EQ-5D instrument, inequalities were identified and useful data was generated to compare regional contexts. It was highlighted how socioeconomic, environmental and lifestyle factors influenced the perception of health. The research allowed to consolidate HRQOL as a valid tool for designing strategies to improve community health.

Keywords: Quality of Life; Public Health; EQ-5D; Social Inequalities; Villa Piletones.

RESUMEN

El estudio abordó la Calidad de Vida Relacionada con la Salud (CVRS) como un componente esencial en la evaluación del bienestar físico, mental y social de la población. Se centró en la comunidad de Villa Piletones, con el objetivo de diagnosticar su situación sanitaria y orientar políticas públicas. A través del uso del instrumento EQ-5D, se identificaron desigualdades y se generaron datos útiles para comparar contextos regionales. Se destacó cómo los factores socioeconómicos, ambientales y de estilo de vida influyeron en la percepción de salud. La investigación permitió consolidar la CVRS como una herramienta válida para diseñar estrategias de mejora en salud comunitaria.

Palabras clave: Calidad de Vida; Salud Pública; EQ-5D; Desigualdades Sociales; Villa Piletones.

INTRODUCTION

Health-related quality of life (HRQoL) is a key concept in public health, as it allows us to understand how people perceive their physical, mental, and social well-being and health status. This approach has gained relevance in research and health policy formulation in recent decades, moving beyond a purely biomedical view of health. Through validated instruments such as the EQ-5D, inequalities can be identified, interventions evaluated, and decisions guided that positively impact the population's lives. In this context, the present research focuses on measuring HRQoL in the community of Villa Piletones to generate information that contributes to the diagnosis of the situation and the design of strategies for improvement in the field of community health.

DEVELOPMENT

Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL)

The concept of health-related quality of life (HRQoL) has evolved considerably in recent decades, integrating physical, mental, and social dimensions of human well-being. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), quality of life is defined as “an individual’s perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and about their goals, expectations, plans, and abilities”.⁽¹⁾

Numerous studies have adopted this holistic approach, which highlights the importance of evaluating not only biomedical indicators but also subjective aspects of well-being.⁽²⁾ In this sense, HRQoL becomes a fundamental tool for evaluating public health interventions, allowing the assessment of diseases, treatments, or environmental contexts in people’s daily lives.⁽³⁾

Measuring HRQoL

HRQoL has been measured using standardized instruments such as the EuroQol-5D (EQ-5D), which is widely used in primary care due to its simplicity and clinical utility.⁽⁴⁾ This questionnaire has been adapted and validated in various Latin American contexts, allowing for meaningful regional comparisons of self-perceived health conditions.

Similarly, Augustovski et al.⁽⁵⁾ emphasize the importance of using valid and culturally adapted instruments for the economic and impact evaluation of health policies, especially in Latin America.

Research in Argentina has shown significant geographical heterogeneity in quality of life linked to structural inequalities and the inequitable distribution of health resources. The National Risk Factor Survey⁽⁶⁾ has also shown how lifestyles and chronic diseases affect different social sectors differently.

Environment and Quality of Life

Finally, the role of the physical and social environment in determining HRQoL is increasingly recognized. The Matanza Riachuelo Basin Authority,⁽⁷⁾ highlights how environmental factors, such as air and water pollution, directly affect the health of the exposed population, especially in densely populated urban areas.

Measuring health-related quality of life (HRQoL) is becoming increasingly relevant as a way of studying population health and analyzing the efficacy and effectiveness of health interventions.

Considering that HRQoL is a multidimensional concept from the patient’s perspective and to assess HRQoL, different instruments have been developed to measure people’s perceptions of their health status objectively. These instruments are classified as generic and specific. Generic instruments generally assess HRQoL without reference to a particular disease or condition and are recommended for use in healthy populations or people with any health condition. Specific instruments are designed to measure HRQoL in people with a particular disease or condition, and their objective is to determine the extent to which that disease or its complications modify the HRQoL of those who suffer from it or how a treatment improves their level of HRQoL.⁽⁸⁾

To assess the HRQoL of the Villa Piletones population, the EuroQol five-dimensional questionnaire (EQ-5D) and its complement, the Visual Analogue Scale (VAS), were chosen. The EQ-5D is a widely used and validated generic instrument that detects health profiles in patients and the general population at both the global and local levels. The choice of this instrument was based on its practicality, psychometric characteristics, and the possibility of making comparisons with results obtained in other studies that have used the same measurement instrument.

As mentioned in the 4th National Risk Factor Survey conducted in Argentina in 2018,⁽⁶⁾ measuring HRQoL can be an important input in formulating healthcare objectives, guidelines, and policies. On the one hand, it allows for evaluating how diseases (generally chronic) and their treatments impact people’s daily lives and, likewise, identifies vulnerable populations. In addition, it provides information for studies on effectiveness, efficacy, risk, economic evaluation, and/or as an indicator of the quality of medical care.

Many countries worldwide have incorporated HRQoL measurement as an additional measure to assess population health, monitor it over time, or compare it with different countries or regions. In Argentina, the National Risk Factor Survey (ENFR) has been incorporated since 2005 into the Ministry of Health’s initiatives to assess access, coverage, and different aspects of health.⁽⁶⁾ In this survey, HRQoL is assessed through a question from the SF-36 (self-assessment of the subject’s health status as Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, and Poor) and the EuroQol EQ-5D-3L instrument.⁽⁴⁾

A study conducted in Argentina in 2013,⁽⁵⁾ analyzed HRQoL and its determining variables based on data from the 2005 ENFR. The study’s main objective was to create a National Atlas of Health-Related Quality of Life, comparing the results between different Argentine provinces or regions.

In his 2015 study,⁽⁹⁾ Marcos Herrera states that subjective perceptions of health can be influenced by individual variables such as low levels of physical activity, tobacco use, hypertension, obesity, educational level, and other socioeconomic factors such as poverty, all of which affect the HRQoL of the Argentine population.^(10,11)

The relevance of this study lies in determining the health-related quality of life of the general population

of Los Piletones. The information obtained from this study will be essential for assessing the situation and thus guiding health promotion measures, preventing diseases, improving treatments, and enabling adequate health planning.

CONCLUSIONS

The measurement of Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) has established itself as a fundamental tool for comprehensively assessing the health status of populations, especially in contexts where social and environmental inequalities significantly influence people's well-being. Using standardized instruments such as the EQ-5D allows the capture of subjective perceptions of health status and the establishment of regional and temporal comparisons that are useful for public health decision-making. In the case of Villa Piletones, the information collected provides valuable input for identifying priority needs, strengthening prevention policies, and promoting interventions that improve the quality of life of its inhabitants. Thus, the importance of incorporating CVRS as a complementary indicator in the planning and evaluating effective and equitable health strategies is highlighted.

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FUNDING

None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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