Reviewer's report

Title: Generic quality of life assessment in dementia patients: a prospective cohort study

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Reviewer: Denise Schmid

Reviewer's report:

Questions/Answers

1. Question/ aim of the study might be better defined.

2. Methods are well described.
   (Additional variables would be interesting: the amount of support by others [social services, day care center, support groups, help from family or others ...] and their statistical correlation with quality of life in different stages of dementia.)

3. enough for the conclusion

4. yes

5. see comments below

6. yes

7. yes

8. The main question (usefullness of the Euroqol in dementia research) should be mentioned in the abstract

9. yes

Reviewer's report
discretionary revisions

General
We already know from several studies that the severity of dementia is not the only factor with impact on QoL of dementia patients and proxies. Several studies also showed that self- and proxy-ratings of patients’ QoL differ among all stages of dementia. Other studies include variables as caregivers burden, amount of support (health care services, day care center, support groups, help from family or others) to assess the impact of dementia on QoL. Aim of the present study was to assess the self- and proxy-ratings of QoL and their relation to the severity of AD. The results found are not surprising but it would be interesting to know what additional variables are important. The question is if the study design included other important variables as mentioned before and if yes they can be
analyzed additionally, eventually only as covariates. The message of the article would be more interesting.

Methods
Methods included are sufficient for the goal and the result of the study. Additional variables would be interesting and important in order to understand QoL of proxies, e.g. the amount of support by others (social services, day care center, support groups, help from family or others ...) and their statistical correlation with quality of life in different stages of dementia.

Discussion
paragraph 2
Authors assume that QoL is reduced for dementia patients because their cognitive functions and (instrumental) activities of daily living are impaired. However the lack of insight in the illness presumes that the patients’ self-rating of QoL is not defined by objectively measurable variables but more subjective and depending on several other variables as e.g. QoL and burden of proxies.

Results (paragraph 3) demonstrate indeed that QoL of patients does not decrease in more severe stages of dementia. This is convenient with everyday practice.

paragraph 4
However QoL of proxies may be affected in more severe stages of the illness. Study result showed that QoL of caregivers does not correlate with severity of illness. This may be due to several reasons. In mild stages of dementia proxies have more difficulties to accept the presence of the progredient illness than in later stages when they are better adopted (as also the authors argue). The burden may vary at different stages and depends not only on compensation of the function loss but also on coping strategies, amount of support and so on. Unfortunately we have no information about such additional variables.

The possible conclusion that a sizeable portion of proxies may suffer as well from cognitive problems or even from neuropsychiatric disorders is not convincing based on the results or should be analyzed.

paragraph 5
The proxies assessment of the patients' QoL is reduced with increased dementia severity of the patient. To my opinion, healthy individuals only assume that QoL must be impaired with dementia symptoms. The difference between patients' self-rated QoL and proxies rating of patients QoL indicates that patients themselves rate differently and more subjective. This has been shown in the present study.

paragraph 7
Discusses the finding that proxies QoL is not only related to the disease but also to other factors as their mood and their own cognitive function.
It would be interesting what other variables have an impact on QoL of caregivers (f.e. support, interventions), but that was not the question of the study.

paragraph 8
Authors conclude that rating QoL with the Euroqol is an useless measure in dementia research.
What should be added is an outlook and suggestions for further studies about QoL in dementia. Additional variables as proposed earlier in the review should e.g. suggested here.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests