

Poster presentation

Continuity of life: development and evaluation of a novel psychiatric concept and instrument

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Background

The Quality of Life concept has come to be associated with many different meanings; subsequently, making it less useful in clinical, epidemiological and service evaluation research. A possible addition, or alternative to Quality of Life is Continuity of Life, which considers the degree to which an event or process (such as mental illness) has disrupted the continuity of a person's present activities and future plans. This project evaluated the Continuity of Life concept and the means by which it is measured, the Continuity of Life Interview.

Materials and methods

The Continuity of Life Interview is semi-structured interview which explores the effect an event/process has had upon the present state and future expectations of a person's life with respect to nine specific life domains and to the global impact. The instrument was administered upon 30 clients of a psychiatric rehabilitation service with a variety of psychiatric diagnoses and a mean age of 44.5 years.

Results

The Continuity of Life Interview was found to be a feasible and reliable tool for assessing the degree to which an event or process interrupts the continuity of individual's life with regard to his/ her activities, hopes and plans. Interviewers considered the instrument as easy to learn and administer, and it was well accepted and understood by interviewees. The kappa co-efficients for inter-rater reliability and test-retest reliability were of 0.845 and 0.451, respectively.