

HEALTH AND SPIRITUALITY: REVIEW OF THE VALIDITY AND APPLICATION OF THE WHOQOL-SRPB INSTRUMENT BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION IN THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

Luiz Roberto da Silva

Corresponding email: luizsilva.dr@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Spirituality has been progressively recognized as a relevant dimension of quality of life, especially in chronic conditions and contexts of existential vulnerability. The WHOQOL-SRPB module (Spirituality, Religiousness and Personal Beliefs), developed by the World Health Organization, was created to measure in a multidimensional way the interface between spirituality, religiosity, personal beliefs, and health. In Brazil, marked by high religious diversity and a strong presence of spirituality in everyday life, the validation and application of this instrument take on methodological and clinical relevance. A narrative review was conducted on the development of the WHOQOL-SRPB, its psychometric validation in Brazil, and the main applications of the instrument in national clinical and population contexts. The WHOQOL-SRPB organizes spirituality into eight domains—connection with oneself or spiritual force, meaning in life, awe, wholeness and integration, spiritual force, inner peace, hope and optimism, and faith—making it possible to measure experiential, existential, emotional, functional, and cognitive dimensions of spirituality. Brazilian validation demonstrated high overall internal consistency ($\alpha \approx 0.96$), adequacy of the individual facets, and evidence of convergent and discriminant validity. National studies indicate broad applicability in general populations and across different medical specialties, including nephrology, cardiology, oncology, and mental health. In conclusion, the WHOQOL-SRPB is a robust, validated, and reliable instrument in the Brazilian context, suitable for clinical and population-based investigations that explore the relationship between spirituality, quality of life, and health.

Keywords: Quality of life; Spirituality; Religiosity; Psychometrics; WHOQOL.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines quality of life as the individual's perception of their position in life within the context of the culture and value systems in which they live, in relation to their goals, expectations, and concerns. From this expanded perspective, the need to include spiritual and existential dimensions as measurable components of quality of life was recognized.

Spirituality has been progressively recognized as a relevant dimension of quality of life, especially in chronic conditions and situations of existential vulnerability. The WHOQOL-SRPB module (Spirituality, Religiousness and Personal Beliefs), developed by the World

Health Organization, was created to assess, in a multidimensional way, the interface between spirituality, religiosity, personal beliefs, and health.

Brazil presents a particularly relevant scenario for this investigation, characterized by religious diversity and a strong presence of spirituality in everyday life. Thus, the validation and application of the WHOQOL-SRPB in the country represent a significant methodological contribution to clinical and public health research.

The objective of this study was to conduct a narrative review of development of the WHOQOL-SRPB, its psychometric validation in Brazil, and the main applications of the instrument in different national clinical contexts.

METHODOLOGY

This is a narrative literature review, focusing on key publications on the development of the WHOQOL-SRPB, its Brazilian validation, and studies of clinical and population-based application. We prioritized works that

describe psychometric properties, conceptual structure, and the use of the instrument in different health contexts.

RESULTS

Development of the WHOQOL-SRPB

The WHOQOL-SRPB was developed through a transcultural multicenter methodology, incorporating perspectives from different religious and non-religious traditions. The final instrument organizes spirituality into eight domains:

1. Connection with being or spiritual force
2. Meaning in life
3. Awe (Awe/Wonder)
4. Wholeness and integration
5. Spiritual power
6. Inner peace
7. Hope and optimism
8. Faith

This structure allows spirituality to be measured as a multidimensional phenomenon.

Brazilian Validation

Brazilian Validation Demonstrated high internal consistency for the global index of the SRPB ($\approx 0,96$) and satisfactory scores on the individual facets, as well as evidence of construct validity.

The Instrument Organizes spirituality into eight domains — spiritual connection, meaning in life,

admiration, totality and integration, spiritual strength, inner peace, hope and optimism and faith, distinguishing experiential, existential, emotional, functional, and cognitive dimensions. National studies demonstrate its applicability in general populations and across different medical specialties, including nephrology, cardiology, oncology, and mental health.

In summary, the WOQOLSRPB instrument evidenced:

1. High overall internal consistency ($\alpha \approx 0.96$)
2. Adequate consistency across individual facets
3. Evidence of convergent and discriminant validity
4. Applicability in clinical and general populations

These results confirm the psychometric robustness of the instrument in the Brazilian context.

Conceptual Distinctions Between Domains

The WHOQOL-SRPB distinguishes the following correlated but non-redundant dimensions:

1. Spiritual connection → experience of transcendence

2. Spiritual strength → coping and resilience

3. Faith → a structured system of beliefs

4. Hope → positive emotional expectation

This architecture allows more refined analyses of spirituality in health.

Clinical Applications in Brazil

Brazilian studies applied the instrument to:

1. Chronic kidney disease and hemodialysis
2. Cardiovascular diseases
3. Oncology
4. Mental health
5. General population

These applications demonstrate the usefulness of the instrument in chronic conditions and diverse clinical settings.

DISCUSSION

The WHOQOL-SRPB shows psychometric robustness and conceptual sophistication, enabling spirituality to be assessed as an experience,

meaning, coping, and belief. The Brazilian validation reinforces its applicability in clinical research and public health. The distinction between correlated but independent domains enables more precise analyses of the relationship between spirituality and health.

CONCLUSION

The WHOQOL-SRPB is a validated and reliable instrument in Brazil, suitable for clinical and population-based investigations on spirituality and quality of life.

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