

Valuation RFP – Sept 2020

The EuroQol Valuation Working Group (VWG) has one of the most challenging and broad remits, reflecting the importance of valuation methodology to all our instruments. The VWG is charged with multiple aims across a variety of areas that include:

- Investigation of how our existing valuation approaches may be further refined;
- Investigation of new approaches to valuing health;
- Examining the basis/rationale for value sets for patient groups; and
- Collaboration with other WGs or approved groups that work on conceptual and practical issues concerned with valuation of EQ-5D technologies

We invite researchers to submit proposals related to these four main aims of the VWG. Additionally for this call, the members of the VWG have identified three priority areas.

First, the ongoing pandemic has created major challenges for our health valuation studies, since our EQ-VT protocol has only been used in context of face-to-face interviews. Many teams have put their valuation studies on hold or deferred data collection because of the pandemic. Remote interviewing has been proposed as an alternative. Unfortunately, we do not know how well this works or if mode of administration affects data in an unintended way. Research that helps to fill this gap is urgently needed to inform decisions about whether and how to continue or start data collection. One way to address this question can involve randomization of respondents to F2F or remote administration of valuation tasks, which may potentially be possible in some locations.

Second, valuation study teams also face the challenge that preferences may have shifted because of the pandemic. This presents study teams that paused data collection during the pandemic with questions about the possibility to aggregate pre/post pandemic values and which of the two have greater long term validity. For study teams that are planning data collection in the near future, the challenges are: whether preferences will change as the pandemic situation changes; how this could be monitored during and beyond the time period covered by the study; and how to establish whether any shift in preferences is great enough to warrant new data collection. If you are able to undertake research that can show whether or not a preference shift has occurred, we invite you to submit a proposal about it, and would like to prioritise work which will report findings in a timeframe to help inform EuroQol policy in a timely way.

Third, the previous issue relates to broader questions about the life cycle of value sets. We have been inclined to think of value sets as permanent entities, but an alternative view is that value sets should have an expected life cycle with anticipated updates or replacements that reflect gradual changes in society, health preferences, and -if relevant- improved methods. How often value sets should be updated is a question without any definite answer. This raises the question how we can tell whether an existing value set can still be considered valid?

Another particular area of VWG work has been the development of a stand-alone DCE protocol. In that document, presented at the September 2020 Virtual Meeting, a number of areas of specific research are highlighted as requiring further work. These include (but are not limited to) standardized code for (1) analyzing DCE data using a range of linear and non-linear approaches, and (2) updating designs with non-zero priors to conduct non-linear analyses.

Finally, we continue to invite you to submit addressing valuation of health states that are considered worse than dead. Using cTTO, for instance, we find that the obtained negative scores do not vary much. We seek to understand why this is the case and whether the findings are a product of people's preferences or indicate a limitation of the method. Broader work on valuation of worse than dead is also welcome.

The VWG welcomes research proposals using a variety of different methodological approaches, but the priority is for projects that would provide practical guidance for the EuroQoL Research Foundation in the above areas.