

(2017) Full Issue PDF, Volume 10, Supplement 1, Journal of Mental Health Research in Intellectual Disabilities, 10:sup1, i-222, DOI: 10.1080/19315864.2017.1368259

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What Indicates and Determines Quality of Life for Elderly People With Intellectual Disabilities?

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KEYWORDS quality of life; support; ageing

Aims: The life expectancy of persons with intellectual disabilities (ID) has significantly increased over the past decades and so has the importance to secure their quality of (later) life. This study aimed to identify indicators of quality of life (QoL) in elderly people with ID as well as influencing factors.

Methods: Five separate focus groups discussed QoL: one group of elderly people with mild ID, aged 61–88 years (n = 9); two expert groups (n = 17); two groups of family and staff from elderly-, ID- and home care (n = 14). We asked the elderly what indicates good QoL, and the supporters and experts what factors influence QoL outcomes. We thematically analyzed the results. **Results:** The elderly people presented material, physical, relational, emotional and existential issues as QoL indicators. All groups found age, (changes in) abilities, dementia, life events, personality, and having (lost) family to be relevant characteristics. Crucial support factors included a long lasting key worker having time, affordable transport to preferred activities, staff attitude and education, adapted environments, additional support in dealing with losses, and dementia- or end-of-life care. Important macro- and meso-factors include vision development, policy focus, sufficient funding, and co-operation between all sectors involved.