



Quality Of Life in a Community Sample

Quarterly updates administering the World Health Organization Quality of Life Brief (WHOQOL-BREF)

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This triannual publication is a data product of the [Center for Social Impact \(CSI\)](#). The Center was initially sponsored by the [Julian Grace Foundation](#) and formally launched in 2020. It has continued to grow with the generous support of CASL's [leadership](#) and [board](#).

Special thanks to the [World Health Organization Quality of Life \(WHOQOL\) Working Group](#) for granting permission to use the [World Health Organization Quality of Life-Brief \(WHOQOL-BREF\)](#) assessment for this project.

We thank CASL's [board of directors](#) for sharing their vision for increasing the needs of special and vulnerable populations through data-informed practice.

Finally, thank you to all program staff and clients for journeying with us. We could not have gotten to where we are without your courage to share your experience with us, as both providers and recipients of care. This is for you.

Executive Summary

Three times each year, the [Chinese American Service League](#) (CASL) measures clients' quality of life to ensure they have what they need not only to be healthy but to thrive. One of the key factors that sets quality of life apart from merely "having enough" is the context of what "enough" means at the individual level. Quality of life, defined as "the perception of individual's position in life in the context of where they live as it relates to their goals," ultimately represents a state of health that impacts the way we navigate our daily lives.

When asking clients about their quality of life, it is important to recognize that although they come through our doors for a specific service, we are asking them to share their experience in the greater context of life outside CASL. In the same way clients are intimately aware about complex problems they face, they are also the best equipped at knowing what it takes to address them. Our quality of life initiative exists as a way to visualize clients' experience more holistically. To find out more on why we measure quality of life, check out our previous [reports](#).

We assess clients' quality of life using the [World Health Organization Quality of Life-Brief \(WHOQOL-BREF\)](#), a 26-question tool that looks at four key domains: physical, psychological, social relationships, and environment. CASL's Center for Social Impact (CSI) compares current quality of life data with historical sets to identify trends and address individual needs. To date, we have collected 2,484 valid¹ responses representing 6,415 clients served during any given year.

This report highlights cumulative changes overall, by domain, and select characteristics. A separate, annual report will be made available at the close of each fiscal year detailing the implications of quality of life data to address programming and community-level issues.

1. Valid responses have a completion rate of 88% or higher as indicated in the [WHOQOL-BREF scoring procedures](#).

What is Quality of Life? (QoL)

qual·i·ty of life

noun

“...an individual's perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns.”



—([The WHOQOL Group, Nov 1995](#))

At a Glance

Capturing quality of life data matters because we know that someone's well being relies on more than what they have or where they live. Just because someone has access to mental healthcare does not mean they are automatically going to utilize it—for a variety of reasons such as stigma, transportation barriers, or cost of care. How someone experiences their quality of life is unique and can even vary at different times for the same individual. The following sections in this report cover overall response rates by select demographic variables, as well as domain-specific observations.

At a glance, we observed the highest overall response rate out of any collection period. This means 98.6% of clients answered most or all of the 26 questions from the WHOQOL-BREF assessment. From September 6, 2022 to October 7, 2022, a total of 561 responses² were collected, which is the second highest recorded count to date. This translates to 2,638 total responses fielded since launching the quality of life initiative in October 2020. Of these responses, 2,484 were considered 'valid,'³ which meant that the completion criteria was met. Most assessments were self-administered on paper forms translated in Chinese-Simplified text and subsequently completed at the time of their visit.

We observed the highest (60) quality of life scores⁴ out of any collection period. By themselves, these scores do not tell us much, because the emphasis is on the patterns over time, not an isolated data point. Although the WHOQOL-BREF contains four domains, we acknowledge the limitations this poses when capturing the entirety of someone's lived experience. Continue reading to find out what changed, what remained the same, and where we go next in understanding our client's' quality of life.

2. Valid responses have a completion rate of 88% or higher as indicated in the [WHOQOL-BREF scoring procedures](#).

3. Ibid.

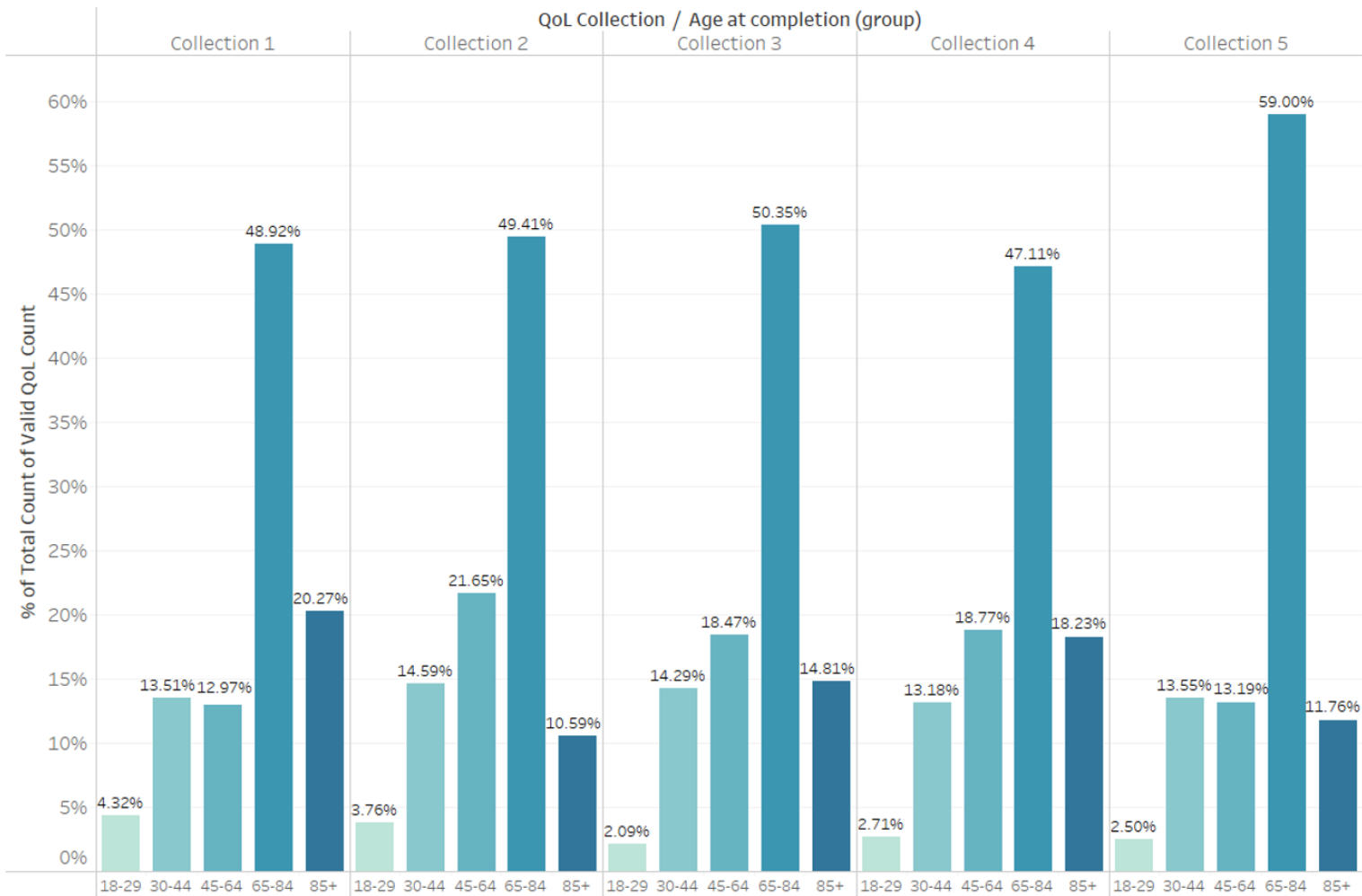
4. Scores range from '0' to '100,' with higher scores indicating higher levels of life satisfaction and perceived quality of life

CUMULATIVE FINDINGS

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Age Distribution by Collection Round

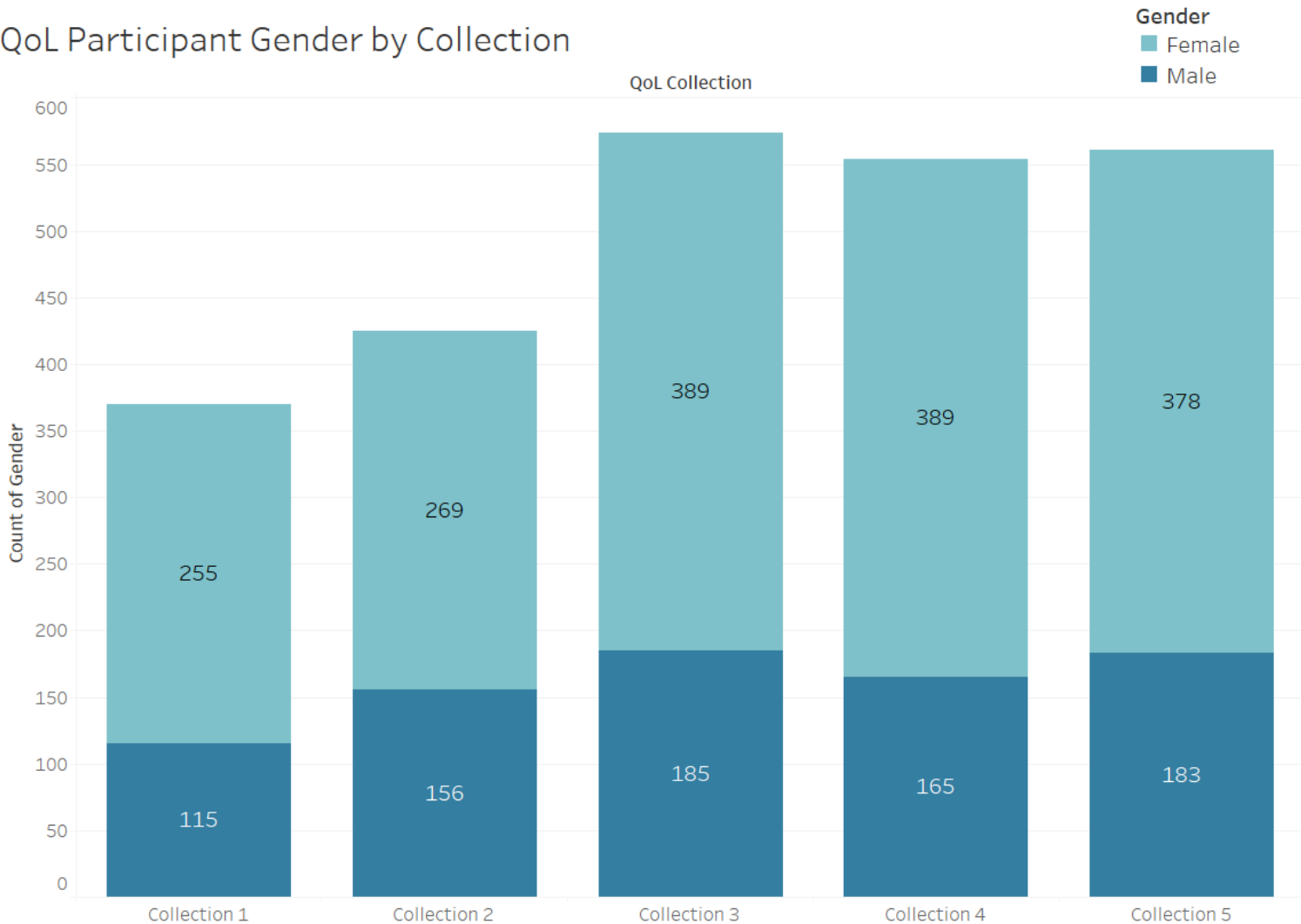
QoL Participant Age Distribution by Collection



The only significant difference was between the current collection round and the second collection round (Fall 2021). Participants were on average three years older than the participants responding in the second collection round. It is important to note that some participants overlap from previous collection rounds. Age variation could be due to any number of factors like how often participants come in for services, or the type of service received (e.g. housing or employment may require fewer visits than English learning classes or immigration assistance).

Gender Distribution by Collection Round

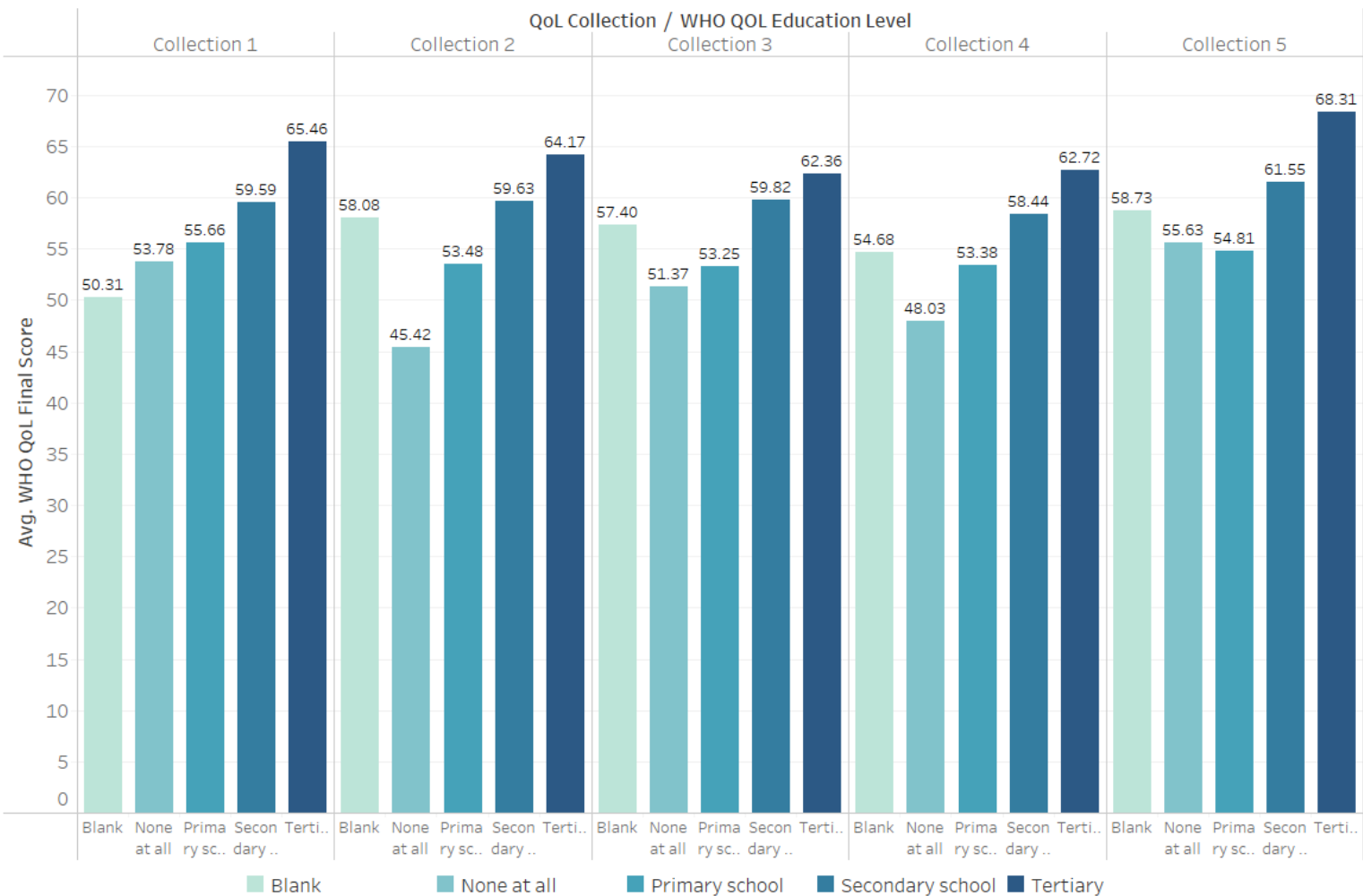
QoL Participant Gender by Collection



There were no significant differences across all collection rounds but what is notable is the unique gender split swaying mostly toward female-identified participants.

Educational Attainment by Collection Round

QoL Average Score by Education Status



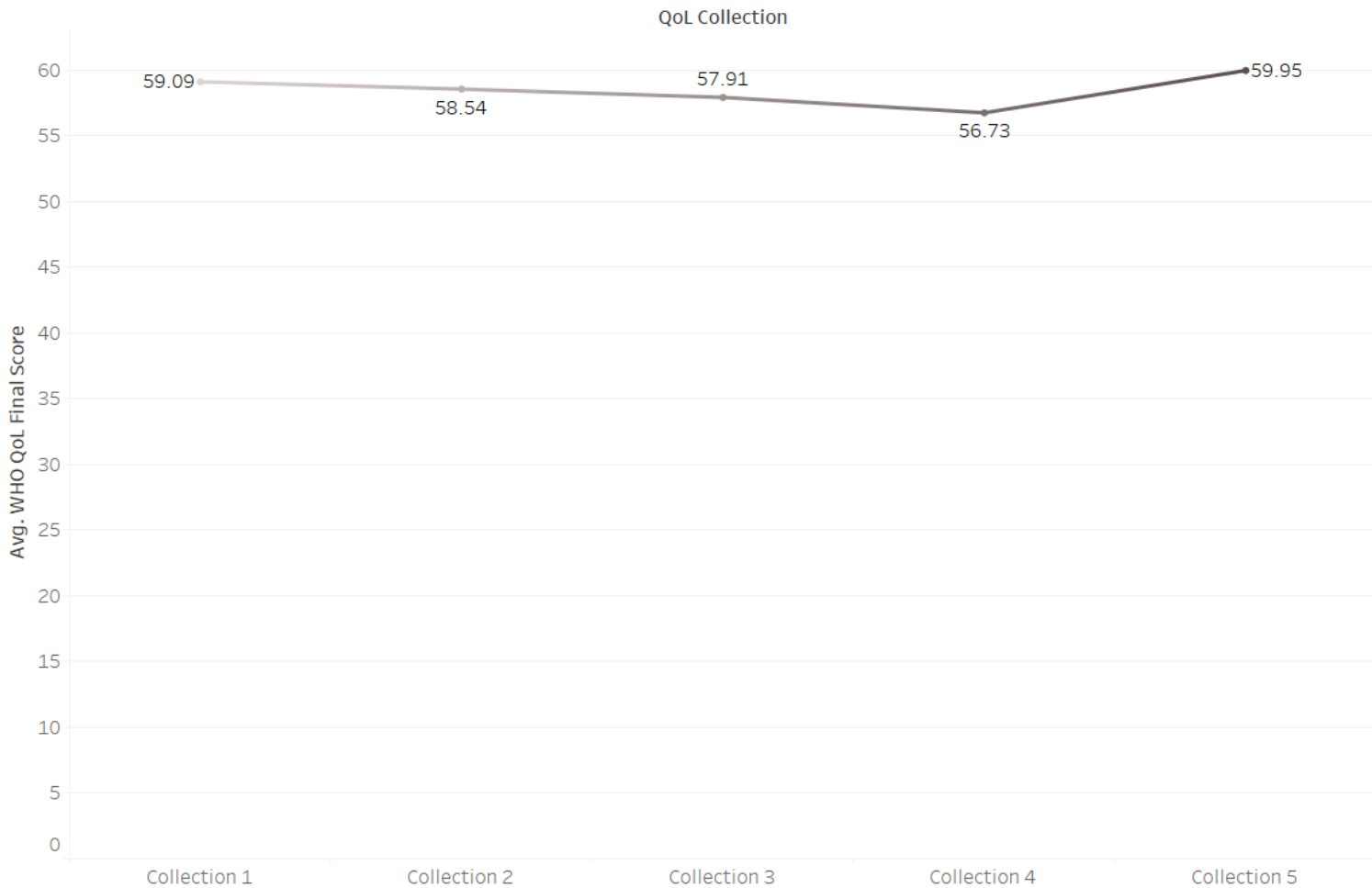
The only significant differences were between the current collection round and the first, second, and third collection rounds. However, the distribution of educational attainment was similar for all rounds thus far. Whether educational attainment is a goal in of itself or as a pathway for accessing other opportunities, it remains clear that it is directly correlated with quality of life outcomes. In the next section, we go over what predictive variables say about trends in QoL scores.

CUMULATIVE FINDINGS

AVERAGE OVERALL SCORES & CORRELATION FACTORS

Average Scores (All Domains) Across All Collection Rounds

QoL Average Score by Collection



When looking at average quality of life scores this time around, we saw the highest score since starting this initiative two years ago. It is important to note that the variation in overall scores only tell us part of the story. By contrast, domain scores offer a more targeted understanding of client experience and how programs respond to them. The next page outlines which sample characteristics are correlated (positively or negatively) by domain.

Correlation Factors

The corresponding table on the next page depicts the relationship between sample characteristics and domain score. Sample characteristics refer to items in the WHOQOL-BREF that ask about demographic information such as age, gender, marital status, or highest level of education attained. This quality of life tool also includes a “current illness” status that is open to interpretation from the respondent’s viewpoint. This information is important because it allows us to get a basic picture of *who* is filling out the form.

The table includes new observations resulting from the most recent data collected. Within a specific domain, a “+” or “-” sign following the response type (e.g. “secondary education (+)”) designates the direction of the relationship associated with a particular sample characteristic. All new observations from this collection round are highlighted for reference.

The following section offers a closer look at each domain and how participants responded based on age, education level, marital status, and feeling ill at the time of taking the assessment.



Domain	Sample Characteristic	Correlation
Physical	Education Level (when compared with <i>no education</i>)	Tertiary (+) Secondary (+)
	Marital Status (when compared with being <i>single</i>)	Married (+) blank (+) NEW! Separated (-)
	Currently Ill (when answering "yes")	Ill (-)
Psychological	Education Level (when compared with <i>no education</i>)	Tertiary (+) NEW! Secondary (+)
	Marital Status (when compared with being <i>single</i>)	Married (+) Separated (-) Living as Married (-)
	Currently Ill (when answering "yes")	Ill (-)
Social Relationships	Gender (when comparing both genders)	NEW Female (+)
	Education Level (when compared with <i>no education</i>)	NEW! blank (-)
	Marital Status (when compared with being <i>single</i>)	Married(+) blank (+) NEW! Widowed (-) NEW! Divorced (-)
	Currently Ill (when answering "yes")	Ill (-)
Environmental	Education Level (when compared with <i>no education</i>)	Tertiary (+) NEW! Primary (-) NEW! blank (-)
	Marital Status (when compared with being <i>single</i>)	Divorced (-)
	Currently Ill (when answering "yes")	Ill (-)

CURRENT & CUMULATIVE

KEY TAKEAWAYS BY DOMAIN

Key Takeaways by Domain

This section explores domain-specific scores for this collection round in addition to what degree to sample characteristics were correlated from a cumulative perspective. Each domain page offers a brief description followed by scores corresponding with all sample characteristics. Notable items are color-coded and a summary is referenced at the bottom of the tables.

Key takeaways are denoted by a(n) green or red asterisk(s) (*). An upward green arrow  signifies a positive correlation and a downward red arrow  demonstrates a negative correlation between score and characteristic (e.g. age, gender, education, etc.). The direction of the relationship(s) is/are followed by the degree⁵ to which the finding is not random.

5. [Confidence interval](#)—higher percentage indicates stronger correlation

Physical

Domain description: Activities of daily living; dependence on medicinal substances and medical aids; energy and fatigue; mobility; pain and discomfort; sleep and rest; work capacity



Question items included in this domain:

To what extent do you feel that physical pain prevents you from doing what you need to do?

How much do you need any medical treatment to function in your daily life?

Do you have enough energy for everyday life?





How well are you able to get around?

How satisfied are you with your sleep?

How satisfied are you with your ability to perform your daily living activities?

How satisfied are you with your capacity for work?

Physical

Domain score average out of 100 (higher is better)	Domain score by age 	Domain score by education 	Domain score by marital status 	Domain score by current illness (felt "ill" at time of assessment) 
58	Age*: Score 18-29: 78 30-44: 73 45-64: 64 65-84: 54 85+: 47	None: 48 Primary: 52 Secondary*:60 Tertiary*: 65	Single: 60 Married*: 61 Living as married: 55 Separated*: 51 Divorced: 59 Widowed: 49	Feeling ill*: 44 Not feeling ill: 60

- * **Age ▼ 0.33 points per year** at 99.9% CI
- * **Tertiary education ▲ 5.7 points vs. no education** at 99.9% CI
- * **Secondary education ▲ 2.56 points vs. no education** at 99.9% CI
- * **Married ▲ 2.34 points vs. single** at 99.9% CI
- * **Separated ▼ 3.1 points vs. not feeling ill** at 87.7% CI
- * **Married(blank) ▲ 2.59 points vs. single** at 90.0% CI
- * **Feeling ill ▼ 11.29 points vs. not feeling ill** at 99.9% CI

Psychological

Domain description: Bodily image and appearance; negative feelings; positive feelings; self-esteem; spirituality / religion / personal beliefs; thinking, learning, memory and concentration



Question items included in this domain:

How much do you enjoy life?

To what extent do you feel your life to be meaningful?





How well are you able to concentrate?

Are you able to accept your bodily appearance?

How satisfied are you with yourself?

How often do you have negative feelings such as blue mood, despair, anxiety, depression?

Psychological

Domain score average out of 100 (higher is better)	Domain score by age 	Domain score by education 	Domain score by marital status 	Domain score by current illness (felt "ill" at time of assessment) 
60	Age*: Score 18-29: 73 30-44: 69 45-64: 63 65-84: 57 85+: 54	None: 53 Primary: 56 Secondary*: 61 Tertiary*: 67	Single: 60 Married*: 62 Living as married*: 52 Separated*: 52 Divorced: 60 Widowed: 55	Feeling ill*: 49 Not feeling ill: 62

- * **Age ▼ 0.21 points per year** at 99.9% CI
- * **Tertiary education ▲ 6.29 points vs. no education** at 99.9% CI
- * **Secondary education ▲ 2.07 points vs. no education** at 99.9% CI
- * **Married ▲ 1.95 points vs. single** at 99.9% CI
- * **Living as married ▼ 5.37 points vs. single** at 99% CI
- * **Separated ▼ 4.8 points vs. single** at 97.4% CI
- * **Feeling ill ▼ 9.66 points vs. not feeling ill** at 99% CI

Social Relationships

Domain description: Personal relationships; social support; sexual activity







Question items included in this domain:

How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?

How satisfied are you with your sex life?

How satisfied are you with the support you get from your friends?

Social Relationships

Domain score average out of 100 (higher is better)	Domain score by age 	Domain score by education 	Domain score by marital status 	Domain score by current illness (felt "ill" at time of assessment) 
56	Age*: Score 18-29: 75 30-44: 69 45-64: 62 65-84: 52 85+: 47	None: 49 Primary: 53 Secondary: 58 Tertiary: 60	Single: 57 Married*: 60 Living as married: 55 Separated: 52 Divorced*: 54 Widowed*: 46	Feeling ill*: 44 Not feeling ill: 58

- * **Age ▼ 0.31 points per year** at 99.9% CI
- * **Female ▲ 1.15 points vs. male** at 85.1% CI
- * **Education(blank) ▼ 2.58 points vs. no education** at 93.8% CI
- * **Married ▲ 3.73 points vs. single** at 99.9% CI
- * **Widowed ▼ 2.45 points vs. single** at 95% CI
- * **Divorced ▼ 2.75 points vs. single** at 85.7% CI
- * **Married(blank) ▲ 3.69 points vs. single** at 91.8% CI
- * **Feeling ill ▼ 8.55 points vs. not feeling ill** at 99.9% CI

Environment

Domain description: Financial resources; freedom, physical safety and security; health and social care: accessibility and quality; home environment; opportunities for acquiring new information and skills; participation in and opportunities for recreation / leisure activities; physical environment (pollution / noise / traffic / climate); transport



Question items included in this domain:

How safe do you feel in your daily life?

How healthy is your physical environment?

Have you enough money to meet your needs?

How available to you is the information that you need in your day-to-day life?





To what extent do you have the opportunity for leisure activities?

How satisfied are you with the conditions of your living place?

How satisfied are you with your access to health services?

How satisfied are you with your transport?

Environment

Domain score average out of 100 (higher is better)	Domain score by age 	Domain score by education 	Domain score by marital status 	Domain score by current illness (felt "ill" at time of assessment) 
59	Age*: Score			
	18-29: 75	None: 55	Single: 60	Feeling ill*: 52
	30-44: 65	Primary*: 56	Married: 60	Not feeling ill: 60
	45-64: 60	Secondary: 59	Living as married: 56	
	65-84: 57	Tertiary*: 65	Separated: 56	
	85+: 55		Divorced*: 55 Widowed: 57	

- * **Age ▼ 0.2 points per year** at 99.9% CI
- * **Tertiary education ▲ 4.97 points vs. no education** at 99.9% CI
- * **Primary education ▼ 1.48 points vs. no education** at 94.2% CI
- * **Education(blank) ▼ 1.89 points vs. no education** at 86.6% CI
- * **Divorced ▼ 5.26 points vs. single** at 99.9% CI
- * **Feeling ill ▼ 6.7 points vs. not feeling ill** at 99.9% CI

UP NEXT →

Up next←

Although we observed the highest (60) quality of life scores since starting this initiative, these scores only tell us a small part of the story. The emphasis is on what's behind the score, how it changes over time, and what it means in the context of understanding our clients. There are four relatively broad domains in the assessment, but we are well-aware that life rarely comes in a neatly packaged data set.

While the implications of quality of life data are still being realized, additional information is warranted to support programming input or community awareness efforts. These are the “in-between” spaces where staff meet clients, the ordinary conversations that take place in the community, the context where *life* happens.

The data we collect from these quality of life assessments helps inform the way we accompany our clients. Recognizing the fact that everyone experiences quality of life, our focus is on individual trends, not merely average scores. Over time, small changes add up, representing systemic patterns that help us map community quality of life. Measuring quality of life is part of a broader effort CASL is engaged in—to bridge communities like ours with platforms that broadcast voice, agency, and self-determination.

Thank you

Questions? Share your thoughts at
CSI@CASLservice.org

