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The Nottingham health profile: Subjective health status and
medical consultations

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Abstract

The decision to consult a doctor for medical reasons may be assumed to be indicative of the perception of a health problem by the patient. A study was carried out to compare the scores of consulters and non-consulters of a general practice, on the Nottingham Health Profile, which is designed to be a standardized and simple measure of subjective health status in the physical, social and emotional domains. Data on physical activity, absence from work and overall self-rated health were also collected. Each section of the Profile showed significant differences in score between consulters and non-consulters. Significant associations were also found between scores on the Profile and both self-rated health and absence from work. The association between scores and amount of physical activity was less clear cut.

Females had a lower subjective health status than did males on all sections except those

reflecting pain and physical mobility problems. The age-group 40–49 had a lower subjective health status than younger and older groups and for this age group males scored higher than females on sections representing emotional, social and sleep problems.

The study indicates that the Nottingham Health Profile is a valid and sensitive measure of subjective health, which may well be a better predictor of need for and utilization of health services than “hard” data such as mortality and morbidity statistics.



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