



## Living with aphasia

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### **Introduction:**

Aphasia is a chronic acquired communication disorder that affects significantly the life of people with aphasia (PWA) (Brown, Worrall, Davidson, & Howe, 2012). Emotional and social changes are frequently reported, although the predictors of QOL are still unknown. Evidence based empirically derived data is needed as foundation for understanding in quality of life (QOL) and population-based QOL instruments would enable comparisons with the broader population, which has not been reported in literature.

### **Objectives:**

To determine the impact of aphasia in PWA's QOL and to identify QOL predictors using a population-based QOL measure.

### **Materials and Methods:**

A cross-sectional descriptive, correlational and comparative study was undertaken with 255 individuals from Portuguese general population (mean age 43 years; 148 females, 107 males), and 25 PWA (mean age 54 years; 12 females and 13 males). All the participants completed the World Health Quality of Life Bref instrument, the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale. PWA completed the Lisbon Aphasia Assessment Battery, Barthel Index, Frenchay Activities Index, Communication Disability Profile and the Modified Mini-Mental State.

### **Results and Discussion:**

The PWA classified their QOL between "bad" and "nor good nor bad" and had significantly worse QOL compared to Portuguese general population. PWA had lower levels of satisfaction in all QOL domains. Emotional status and participation were the best predictors of PWA's QOL.

### **Conclusion:**

Aphasia negatively and significantly affects PWA's lives and emotional status and participation are the best QOL predictors. Aphasia assessment and intervention should take into account all the factors that influence PWA's QOL so the central goal of enhancing it can be achieved. These results are important for identifying and planning support needs carried out by the service providers allowing the adjustment of health programs based on people's real life needs.



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**References:**

Brown, K., Worrall, L., Davidson, B., & Howe, T. (2012). Living successfully with aphasia: a qualitative meta-analysis of the perspectives of individuals with aphasia, family members, and speech-language pathologists. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 14(2), 141-155.

