

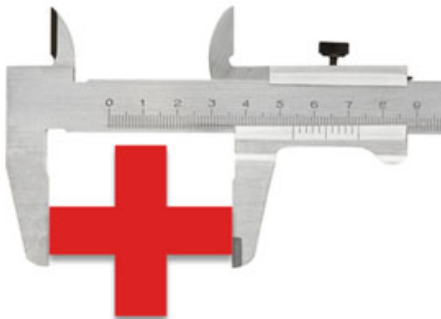
What affects general subjective evaluations of health?

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The Present and Future of Longitudinal Cross-sectional
and Panel Survey Research

General subjective evaluations of health

What do they mean? What do people account for?
How reliable are such measures?



Subjective evaluations of health

- ▶ What affects people's general evaluation of health?
- ▶ Do the general evaluations of health reflect people's optimism?
- ▶ Are people able to accurately compare themselves to people of their own age?

Measures of health in POLPAN (2008 & 2013)

General self-evaluations

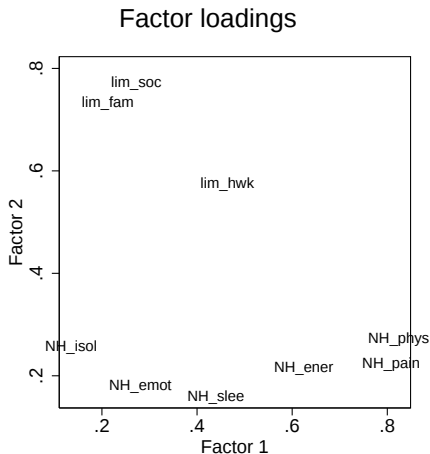
- ▶ Self-assessed mood
 - ▶ 1 – Very good...
 - ▶ 4 – Very bad
- ▶ Self-assessed health compared to people of your age
 - ▶ 1 – Much better...
 - ▶ 5 – Much worse

Measures of health in POLPAN (2008 & 2013)

Specific evaluations

- ▶ Nottingham Health Profile (38 items)
 - ▶ Lack of energy
 - ▶ Pain
 - ▶ Reduced mobility
 - ▶ Sleep problems
 - ▶ Emotional problems
 - ▶ Social isolation
- ▶ Problems caused by poor health in...
 - ▶ Caring for the house
 - ▶ Social life
 - ▶ Family life

Measures of health in POLPAN (2008 & 2013)



Rotation: orthogonal varimax
Method: maximum likelihood

Third factor – emotional problems

What affects people's general evaluation of health?

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	Low mood		Bad health	
Lack of energy	0.01***	(0.000)	0.02***	(0.000)
Pain	-0.01**	(0.004)	0.01*	(0.015)
Emotional problems	0.06***	(0.000)	0.01	(0.209)
Sleep problems	0.01	(0.053)	0.00	(0.137)
Social isolation	-0.00	(0.997)	-0.00	(0.541)
Limited mobility	-0.00	(0.483)	0.00	(0.916)
(Problems) housework	0.39	(0.130)	0.52	(0.050)
(Problems) social life	0.10	(0.748)	1.37***	(0.000)
(Problems) family life	0.68*	(0.045)	0.44	(0.221)
Observations	2622		2576	

Note: ordered logit, p-values in parentheses;

What affects people's general evaluation of health?

	Low mood		Bad health	
Factor 1 (mobility, pain)	0.41***	(0.000)	0.85***	(0.000)
Factor 2 (problems)	0.48***	(0.000)	0.74***	(0.000)
Factor 3 (mood)	1.27***	(0.000)	0.50***	(0.000)
Observations	2622		2576	

Note: ordered logit, p-values in parentheses;

What affects people's general evaluation of health?

- ▶ Energy level, an often neglected aspect of health, strongly correlates with general assessments of mood and health
- ▶ Psychological mood and physical health are strongly correlated
- ▶ Problems caused by poor health serve as a clue to assess own health

Do the general evaluations of health reflect just people's optimism?

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Measure of optimism: factor analysis



- ▶ Trust (People can be trusted)
- ▶ Optimism (Future is too uncertain to plan anything, R)
- ▶ Conflicts (Perception of conflicts in the society, R)

Do the general evaluations of health reflect just people's optimism?

	Low mood		Bad health	
Factor optimism	-0.17*	(0.049)	0.01	(0.939)
Lack of energy	0.01***	(0.000)	0.01**	(0.008)
Pain	-0.00	(0.669)	0.02**	(0.004)
Emotional problems	0.05***	(0.000)	0.00	(0.680)
Sleep problems	0.00	(0.163)	0.00	(0.283)
Social isolation	0.00	(0.943)	0.01	(0.311)
Limited mobility	-0.01	(0.118)	0.02*	(0.032)
(Problems) housework	0.25	(0.492)	0.70*	(0.030)
(Problems) social life	-0.03	(0.939)	1.78***	(0.000)
(Problems) family life	0.76	(0.118)	-0.61	(0.179)
Observations	1501		1471	

Note: ordered logit, p-values in parentheses;

Do the general evaluations of health reflect just people's optimism?

But... optimism strongly correlates with the specific evaluations of health (NHS)

	Factor optimism (OR)	<i>p</i>
Lack of energy	0.69	0.000
Pain	0.65	0.000
Emotional problems	0.55	0.000
Sleep problems	0.71	0.000
Social isolation	0.70	0.004
Limited mobility	0.76	0.016
(Problems) housework	0.59	0.001
(Problems) social life	0.53	0.000
(Problems) family life	0.59	0.003

Note: logistic regressions, controlling for age and age²;

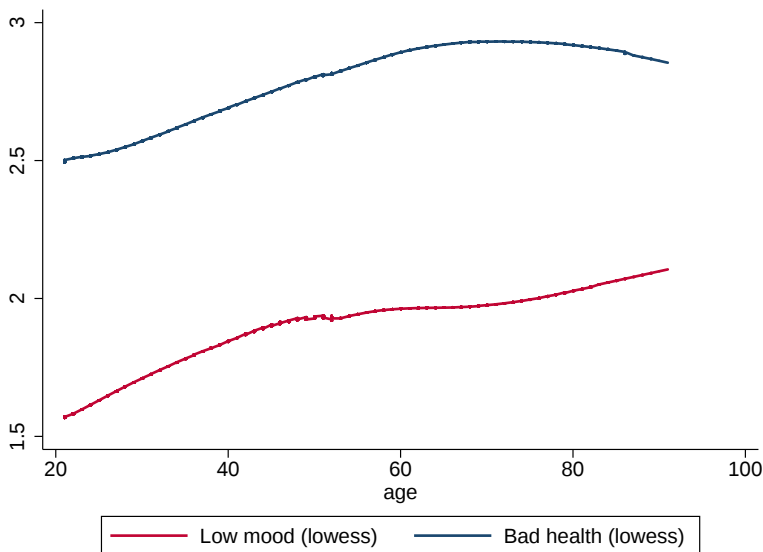
Do the general evaluations of health reflect just people's optimism?

Optimism...

- ▶ correlates with detailed measures of health
- ▶ correlates with general evaluation of mood
- ▶ correlates with general evaluation of health **only** through the detailed measures of health

Are people able to accurately compare themselves to people of their own age?

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Are people able to accurately compare themselves to people of their own age?

	Low mood		Bad health	
age	0.07	(0.052)	-0.33***	(0.000)
age ²	-0.10***	(0.000)	-0.11***	(0.000)
Lack of energy	0.01***	(0.000)	0.02***	(0.000)
Pain	-0.01**	(0.001)	0.01*	(0.028)
Emotional problems	0.05***	(0.000)	0.00	(0.619)
Sleep problems	0.00	(0.115)	0.01**	(0.005)
Social isolation	0.00	(0.876)	-0.00	(0.814)
Limited mobility	-0.00	(0.803)	0.02**	(0.006)
(Problems) housework	0.41	(0.112)	0.65**	(0.009)
(Problems) social life	0.11	(0.714)	1.42***	(0.000)
(Problems) family life	0.69*	(0.039)	0.28	(0.418)
Observations	2597		2551	

Note: ordered logit, p-values in parentheses;

Are people able to accurately compare themselves to people of their own age?

- ▶ people "over control" for age when they evaluate their general health
- ▶ this did not happen for the general evaluations of mood (not relative to age)

So What?

So what?

- ▶ energy level seems a good overall indicator of health, both psychological (mood) and physical
- ▶ in NHP **Emotional problems** correspond to general evaluation of mood

Pain and **Limited mobility** correspond to general evaluation of physical health

→ potential for creating an index?

- ▶ general evaluation of physical health is not affected by peoples' optimism
(although optimism correlates with health)
- ▶ if we ask people to compare themselves to their age group, they tend to over-correct for age