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COMPARISON BETWEEN TELEPHONE INTERVIEW AND SELF-COMPLETION OF THE MACDQOL

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AIMS: The MacDQoL is an individualised measure of the impact of macular degeneration (MD), an incurable eye condition, on quality of life (QoL). If MD is severe, people may have difficulty reading and must complete the MacDQoL by interview. Self-completion is more economical. Self-completion and telephone interview were compared to determine whether they may be used in one study. **METHODS:** Participants were members of the UK MD Society (199 contacted, 45 unable to read, 14 declined, attrition = 13): N=127, 79% women, mean age 78 yrs. Vision status: 17% registered blind, 38% partially sighted, 45% not registered. All could read large print, using low vision aids if necessary. They were randomised to experimental (E) or control (C) group. All completed the MacDQoL twice (mean interval 39 days). E completed once by telephone, once by self-completion (50% self-completed at time 1, 50% at time 2). C self-completed twice. MacDQoL domain scores are weighted by importance, summed and divided by the number of applicable domains to give an average weighted impact score. Scores were compared using t-tests and 2-way mixed design ANOVA. **RESULTS:** C scores at times 1 and 2 did not differ. E reported greater negative impact of MD on QoL when self-completing than by telephone interview ($p < 0.001$). ANOVA showed main effects of completion time ($p < 0.001$) and completion method ($p = 0.012$). An interaction ($p < 0.001$) indicated a larger difference between the methods when telephone interview was at time 1. The MacDQoL showed good reliability with both methods (Cronbach's alphas > 0.94). Using both methods, the MacDQoL could detect differences between the three vision status categories (p 's < 0.001) **CONCLUSIONS:** Completion method did influence MacDQoL scores. Self-completion for those able to read and telephone interview for those more severely impaired would underestimate the impact of severe MD on QoL. Telephone interview is preferable except where all participants have only mild or unilateral MD.