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ABSTRACT FORM

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<i>Title.</i>	Quality of life and treatment satisfaction in patients with hypothyroidism
<i>Content.</i>	<p>Background: Hypothyroidism, a life-long chronic disease that slows the metabolism, is particularly prevalent in women and the elderly. Treatment satisfaction and the impact of the condition on quality of life (QoL) were investigated.</p> <p>Methods: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 38 patients with hypothyroidism (30 women and 8 men, mean age 51.9 (29 – 79) years, 37 treated with thyroxine) at three UK centres. The prime purpose of the interviews was to determine item selection for two new condition-specific questionnaires measuring QoL and treatment satisfaction. Open questions concerned the effects of underactive thyroid and its treatment on QoL, with interviewees being asked to imagine life without the disorder, (to elicit life domains impacted by hypothyroidism), and to comment aloud whilst completing draft questionnaires. Interview data were analysed for content.</p> <p>Findings: Patients described the negative impact of underactive thyroid on a number of life domains, particularly on energy, weight, physical appearance, physical capabilities, and motivation. The great majority reported on-going negative impact on some aspects of life despite thyroxine treatment. Several patients (24%) expressed concerns about receiving sub-optimal thyroxine replacement that did not relieve lingering symptoms, and there was much dissatisfaction with lack of information provided by healthcare professionals about the condition and its treatment, particularly at diagnosis.</p> <p>Discussion: Multiple aversive symptoms remain despite thyroxine treatment, causing considerable dissatisfaction and marked impairment of QoL in many patients. Condition-specific measures of QoL and treatment satisfaction were designed for use in evaluating and improving treatment for people with hypothyroidism and are now under development.</p>