

## Question in Project:

FReDA-W2a - Questions about infection with and vaccination against COVID-19 (English Version)

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## Question Topic:

Public health/ Health impairments

## Construct:

Severity of symptoms of COVID-19 disease

## General Information:

**\*Note: The item was tested in German. This is an English translation of the original German wording.**

## Question Text:

How severe were the symptoms of your COVID-19 disease?

*[Wie stark waren die Symptome Ihrer COVID-19 Erkrankung?]*

0 No symptoms at all *[Gar keine Symptome]*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10 Life-threatening symptoms *[Lebensbedrohliche Symptome]*

## Cognitive Techniques:

Category Selection Probing

## Findings for Question:

Question 2 was asked only of respondents who had indicated in question 1 that they had (probably) been infected with the COVID-19 virus ( $n = 30$ ). With the exception of the scale value "10 - Life-threatening symptoms," test persons used the entire range of the answer scale. The test persons located themselves in roughly equal numbers in the lower half of the scale (scale values 0 to 4,  $n = 13$ ) and the upper half of the scale (scale values 6 to 10,  $n = 12$ ). Five subjects opted for the middle category. The aim of the pretest was to investigate how respondents justified their answers to question 2 (N1\_F2, see Appendix) and whether the justifications matched the selected scale value.

The reasons given by the majority of the test persons matched the scale values selected in each case, that is, lower values on the response scale corresponded to no or only mild symptoms and higher values to comparatively strong symptoms:

- *"I didn't feel anything."* (TP88, scale score: 0)
- *"I only had a cold and a mild fever, but I was in bed for a few days."* (TP189, scale score: 3)
- *"Severe symptoms, the course of illness was longer and more severe."* (TP143, scale score: 7)
- *"I had a fever of 39.6 degrees and very severe bone pain and headache. I couldn't eat for ten days. It was very bad."* (TP170, scale score: 9)

The answers of two respondents gave the impression that they had chosen rather too low (TP85) or too high (TP228) scale values for their symptoms:

- *"I had acute breathing problems and had to be hospitalized, but not in intensive care. In addition, I had a circulatory collapse at night while sleeping. For me, the situation was bad, but not so bad that it became life-threatening. Also, the situation was not harmless, so I chose 5, the middle."* (TP85, scale score: 5)
- *"Chills and fever one night, then [it] got better. So not as bad as a 10, but not as easy as a 5."* (TP228, scale score: 7)

However, because the survey question asks for a subjective assessment, these perceived reasons that do not match the answer do not pose a problem for data quality.

## Recommendations:

The results of the pretest do not indicate any problems with the question, so it can be left in its current form.