Question in Project:

SHARE Wave 9 – New items on financial decision making, successful ageing, eating habits, sleep, long-term care insurance, and long-term care expectations (English Version)

Question Topic:

Public health/ Health impairments

Construct:

Sleep disorders diagnosed by health professionals

General Information:

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

Question Text:

Have you ever been told by a health professional that you have a condition that resulted in changes in the way you sleep?
[Wurde Ihnen je von medizinischem Fachpersonal mitgeteilt, dass Sie an einer Krankheit leiden, die Veränderungen Ihrer Art zu schlafen zur Folge hatte?]

Answer Categories:

Yes *[Ja]*
No *[Nein]*

Cognitive Techniques:

Paraphrasing, Comprehension Probing, Specific Probing

Findings for Question:

1. How do the respondents interpret the question?

All ten test persons answered the question with "no". Six of them interpreted the question as intended, i.e. as to whether they had ever been told by medical professionals that they had sleep problems due to illness:

- *"[The question was] whether a doctor had ever told me that I snore because of an illness."* (TP 07)
- *"[The question is] whether my family doctor or a specialist ever told me I had trouble sleeping for certain reasons."* (TP 08)

Three test persons (TP 01, 02, 10) should have answered the question in the affirmative based on their (previous) statements, at least if one interprets their described problems as "illnesses". All three subjects reported problems with their nose or respiratory tract that would influence their sleep:

- *"I have very small and narrow nasal conchas, which are often closed because I also have an allergy. Especially when I lie flat in bed. That is simply the case. That also includes the fact that I snore louder because of it. Sometimes I wake up from my own snoring, which is terrible. I've been to an otolaryngologist for my nose. And he thinks I could have an operation to enlarge the nasal concha. But it's not so bad that I have to go to a sleep lab now, or need sleep masks or anything. I don't think so."* (TP 01)
- *"So I don't snore loudly, but I know I snore because I took a sleep test years ago. And then the doctor said that I had a very quiet snore, a very slight handicap in my nose."* (TP 02)
- *"The question is that if you have your respiratory tract straightened - as I did about 35 years ago - this will have an effect on your breathing and snoring. That was then gone."* (TP 10)

In addition, test person 06 misunderstood the question as to whether a healthcare professional had ever told her that she had sleep problems, i.e., whether it was diagnosed during sleep: *"[The question is] whether a healthcare professional told me that my sleep was not normal. But now that I haven't been in hospital for 30 years, I don't think that happened. [...] Doctors and nurses [are] the only ones who could hear me at night, theoretically."*

2. What do they understand by "health professional"?

The test persons associated with this term mainly (family) doctors (n = 9), specialists/doctors in sleep laboratories (n = 5), nurses (n = 3) and medical assistants (n = 1). None of the test persons stated that the term was incomprehensible or complicated.

Recommendations:

Question: In order to avoid misinterpretation of the question, we recommend rephrasing it. One possible formulation is:

"Have you ever been told by health care professionals that you have a disease or physical impairment that affects your sleep (your sleep quality)?" *["Wurde Ihnen je von medizinischem Fachpersonal mitgeteilt, dass Sie an einer Krankheit oder körperlichen Beeinträchtigung leiden, die Auswirkungen auf Ihren Schlaf (Ihre Schlafqualität) hat?"]*

Response Options: No changes recommended.