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14.5 Social functioning

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Social functioning generally concerns relationships with other persons and participation. It is strongly linked with the environment where one lives. Social functioning can be divided in the following dimensions: 1) social networks, 2) social activity and participation, 3) loneliness, 4) social support, and 5) social skills (Tiikkainen and Heikkinen 2011).

The Health 2011 Survey includes several questions that can be applied as indicators of social functioning (Table 14.5.1) although some of them can be used within other frameworks and using other concepts as well. The questions derive from different traditions to define and measure social functioning (Weiss 1973, Berkman and Syme 1979, Jylhä and Aro 1989, Bowling 1997, Heikkinen 1997, Glass et al. 1999).

Appendices 4 and 5 give the information which questions concerning social functioning were presented to the young adults (18–28 years). Furthermore, the COURAGE sub-study included a large section on social networks (see Chapter 19.2).

FUNCTIONING

Table 14.5.1. Indicators of social functioning and their position in Health 2011 Survey.

Indicator	Interview	Questionnaires
1) Social networks		
The size of social networks		
Number of children	BC02 (men),	
The size of household	BD22 (women)	
Living alone	AB01	
Marital status	AB01	
	AA01	
Contacts		
Seeing friends and relatives		Q1: Kys1_K2010, Kys1_K2012
2) Social activity and participation		
Participation in leisure time activities		Q1: Kys1_K2001-Kys1_K2014 ¹⁾
Health problems hindering leisure time activities		Q1: Kys1_K0501
Musculoskeletal symptoms hindering leisure time activities ²⁾		Q2: OIRE_65B
Productive social participation		
Helping others	HD09-10	
3) Loneliness³⁾		
		Q1: T11_Kys1_K52
4) Social support		
Possibilities to get help and support from people close to oneself		Q1: Kys1_K680101-Kys1_K680407 ⁴⁾
Use of help	HD-section ⁵⁾	
Satisfaction with personal relationships ⁶⁾		Q1: T11_Kys1_K42_4
5) Social skills		
Taking care of matters together with other people	HA01N	
Presenting matters to unknown people	HA01O	

Q1 = Questionnaire 1; Q2 = Questionnaire 2

¹⁾ Described in Chapter 16

²⁾ Repeatability: kappa 0.81 (see Table 4.2.1 in Chapter 4.2)

³⁾ Repeatability: kappa 0.75 (see Table 4.2.2 in Chapter 4.2)

⁴⁾ Described in Chapter 16

⁵⁾ Described in Chapter 15.2

⁶⁾ The question belongs to EUROHIS-8 quality of life -measure