Social and Behavioral Sciences
Assignment 2

Needs Assessment to Identify Disparities in Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQOL)

Presentation Overview

- **Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQOL): concepts and measurement**
    - **CDC HRQOL Surveillance Program's Healthy Days Measures**
- **State trends in unhealthy days**
- **Assignment overview: Needs assessment and disparities in HRQOL**

•Introduction and outline of the presentation.

•3 primary components of presentation include an overview of QOL, HRQOL, and the CDC's Healthy Days Measures, relevant data resulting from use of the measures, and assignment instructions.

Measuring Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQOL)

- **Broad outcome measures designed to measure physical, emotional, and social dimensions of health** (*McDowell & Newell, 1996*).

- **No one definition of HRQOL is agreed upon, but generally assessed with generic measures (e.g., Short-Form 36) or disease-specific measures (e.g., Quality of Life in Epilepsy Scale-10** (*Ware & Sherbourne, 1992; Cramer et al., 1996*).

- **Quality of Life Instruments Database (QOLID): Online database of generic and disease-specific measures.** http://www.proqolid.org

•Introduce the concept of HRQOL and its measurement.

•There are varying definitions for HRQOL.

•There are many ways and scales with which to measure HRQOL depending on one's needs. Generally, each scale has its advantages and disadvantages that make it more or less advantageous to use depending on the scenario in question. See the provided link for a database of QOL scales.

What is Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQOL)?

- **For public health surveillance purposes, HRQOL was defined as…"an individual's or group's perceived physical and mental health over time."**
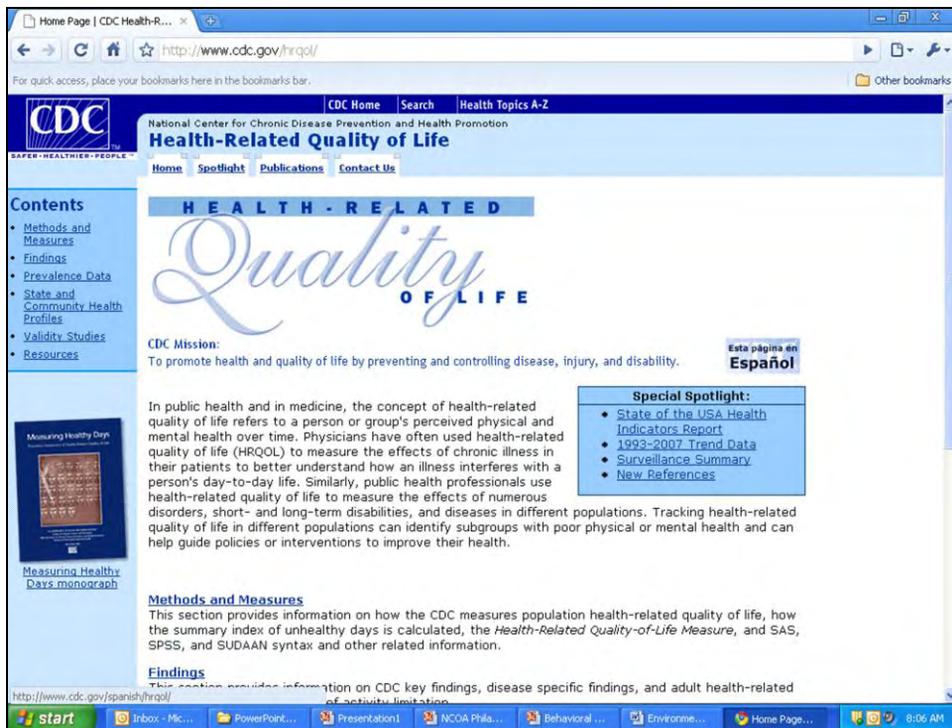 (*Measuring Healthy Days*, CDC 2000)

- **http://www.cdc.gov/hrqol**

- **http://www.cdc.gov/brfss**

•This slide presents a definition of HRQOL as defined by CDC.

•Links: 1st link is to the CDC's HRQOL Surveillance Program homepage;

2nd link is to the CDC BRFSS homepage. The Healthy Days Measures are administered as part of the annual BRFSS.

•This is CDC's HRQOL Surveillance Program's homepage.

•Use this slide just to familiarize the class with the website and what it contains. Note the definition of HRQOL in the main paragraph.

Core Healthy Days Measures

1. Would you say that in **general** your **health** is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?

2. Now thinking about your physical health, which includes physical illness and injury, for how many **days during the past 30 days** was your **physical health not good**?

3. Now thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your **mental health not good**?

4. During the past 30 days, for about how many days did **poor physical or mental health keep you from doing your usual activities**, such as self-care, work, or recreation?

•These are the 4 core Healthy Days measures (HRQOL-4) used in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES).
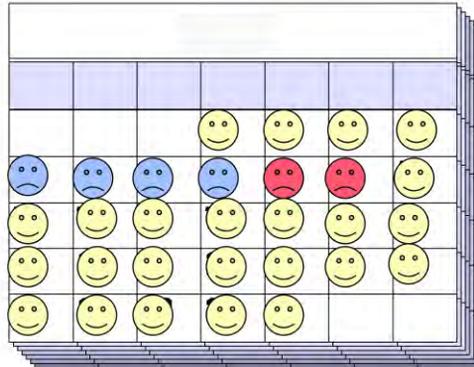
•While there are other Healthy Days measures that are sometimes included in these surveys (Activity Limitations module (4 questions), Healthy Days Symptoms module (5 questions)) (see http://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/hrqol14_measure.htm), these are 4 core questions that are most widely used.

Unhealthy Days = days in the past 30 days when both physical and mental health were not good
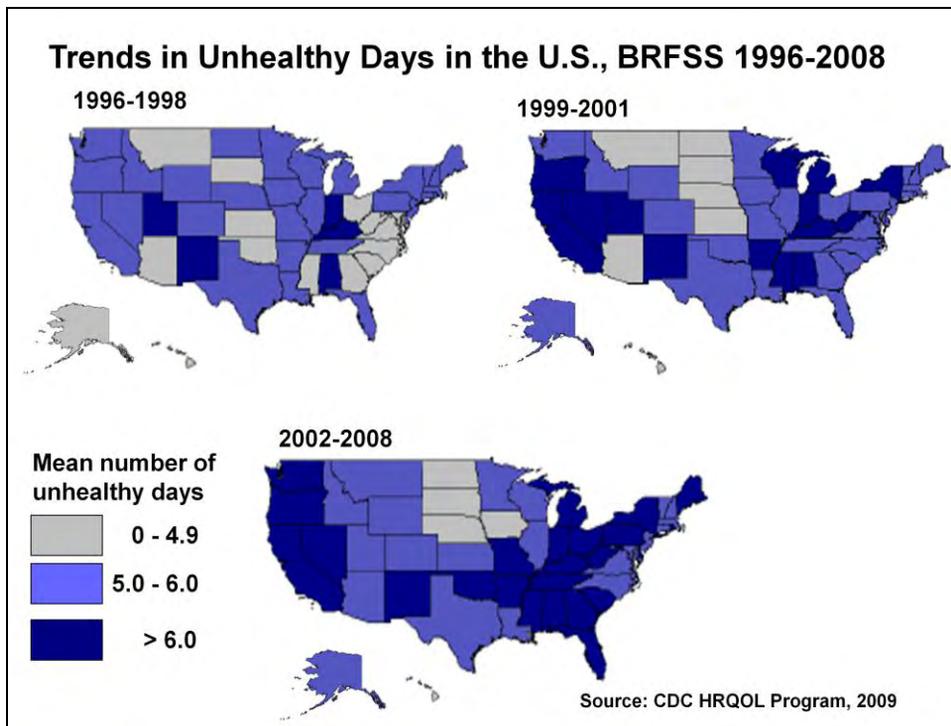
•This graphic provides an idea as to how physically, mentally, and overall unhealthy days are calculated from the questions on the previous slide.

•Unhealthy days are an estimate of the overall number of days during the previous 30 days when the respondent felt that either his or her physical or mental health was not good. To obtain this estimate, responses to questions 2 and 3 are combined to calculate a summary index of overall unhealthy days, with a logical maximum of 30 unhealthy days. For example, a person who reports four physically unhealthy days and two mentally unhealthy days is assigned a value of six unhealthy days, and someone who reports 30 physically unhealthy days and 30 mentally unhealthy days is assigned the maximum of 30 unhealthy days.

•The majority of individuals report substantially different numbers of physically unhealthy days versus mentally unhealthy days; for example, in the 1998 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 67.8% of the 68,619 adults who reported any unhealthy days reported only physically unhealthy days or mentally unhealthy days.

Trends in Unhealthy Days in the U.S., BRFSS 1996-2008

Mean number of unhealthy days
0 - 4.9
5.0 - 6.0
> 6.0

Source: CDC HRQOL Program, 2009

•Shows state trends in mean number of unhealthy days over time.

•The maps indicate that, generally speaking, most states are displaying a trend of increasing number of unhealthy days in an average month over time.

•Relevance: students are being asked to calculate mean number of unhealthy days in a small group sample and compare to state estimates.

Assignment Instructions:

1. Select a group (≤ 20 people within the class or school, among friends or family members) with which to perform a needs assessment.

2. Using the CDC HRQOL Surveillance Program's Healthy Days measures (four core questions available at http://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/methods.htm) and various demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, race), develop a questionnaire for either verbal or written administration.

3. After completing data collection, calculate the mean number of physically, mentally, and overall unhealthy days for the sample by subgroups.

4. Using the HRQOL Program's Prevalence Data Page (available at http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/HRQOL/), compare the local findings to state estimates (e.g., mean number of unhealthy days in females in your sample vs. the state estimates for female unhealthy days).

•Instructions for the student assignment

•See http://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/methods.htm#calculate for information on how to calculate number of unhealthy days

Instructions continued:

5. Based on your observations, explain observed differences, if any, between the group findings and state estimates.

6. According to your data, propose a theoretically-based intervention (choose a health behavior theory with which you are familiar), for the surveyed group to improve HRQOL.

7. Write a paper (4-5 pages) that (a) describes the methods, findings, and interpretation of your findings on HRQOL in the sample you studied; and (b) explains the similarities or differences between the findings for your sample and comparable state estimates in the most recent data year available (see item #4).

•Student instructions continued.
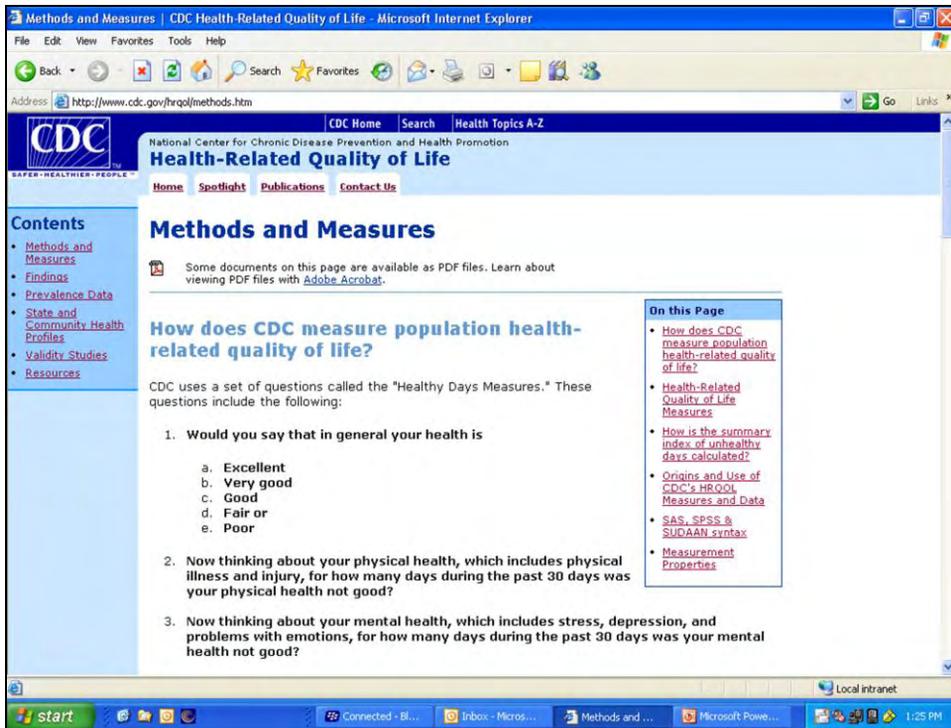
•CDC HRQOL Surveillance Program's Methods and Measures page.

•Contains the four core Healthy Days measures and a link to an explanation on how to calculate overall unhealthy days.
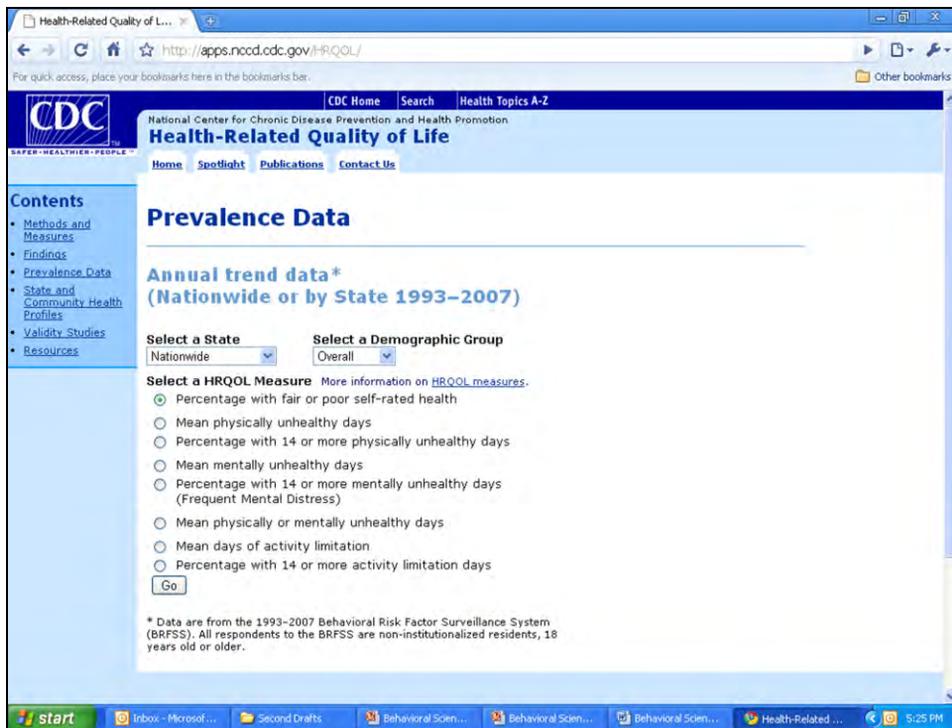
•CDC HRQOL Surveillance Program's Prevalence Data page.

•Students will use this webpage to query HRQOL data and make comparisons with state and national estimates.