

## **Exploring the Concept of Quality of Life Among Children Living in Context of Vulnerability**

Lise Poissant<sup>3,1</sup>, Johanne Higgins<sup>3,1</sup>, Caline El-Khoury<sup>2</sup>, Emilie Bastien<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Rehabilitation, Montreal, Quebec, Canada,*

<sup>2</sup>*School of Public Health, Montreal, Quebec, Canada,* <sup>3</sup>*Université de Montreal/Faculty of Medicine/School of Rehabilitation/Occupational Therapy Program, Montreal, Quebec, Canada*

**Introduction:** Quality of life (QoL) is a multidimensional construct recognized as a valid and essential parameter to evaluate the impact of interventions. However, defining QoL remains a complex exercise as it must address the cultural and value system of individuals. To our knowledge, this has not yet been done for children living in refugee camps or vulnerable contexts.

**Objective:** This project aimed to describe concepts that contribute to the social, physical and emotional domains of quality of life among children living in refugee camps/vulnerable contexts.

**Methods:** We conducted 16 focus groups (FG) with children aged 4-7, 8-12, 13-18, with parents and with professionals. FG were held, with a translator, in refugee camps/slums in Thailand and in Bangladesh. There were two FG per age category in each country. Discussions were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using a thematic approach.

**Results:** Overall, 19 concepts emerged. Examples of concepts associated to children living in refugee camps are: having safe and accessible places to play, being hungry (physical domain); being appreciated by others, feeling useful, making own decisions, having opportunity to develop new skills/learn, having balance between work and play (emotional domain) and; living in a loving environment, being listened to, taking meals with family (social domain). There was strong consensus between parents/professionals and children.

**Conclusions:** Cultural and context-specific concepts that influence the QoL of children living in refugee camps are important to consider. Concepts will be translated into items/questions to derive a first measure of QoL for children living in refugee camps/vulnerable contexts.