

P7032

# **SCOTTISH HEALTH SURVEY 2008 COGNITIVE PILOT REPORT**

## **Introduction**

Sixteen respondents participated in cognitive interviews in August/September 2007 to test questions from the 2008 Scottish Health Survey. Respondents were recruited from in and around Dundee and Edinburgh. The respondents:

- Ages ranged from early 20's to late 80s: 22, 26, 28, 28, 42, 41, 44, 46, 51, 54, 64, 67, 70, 78, 87, 89,
- 9 women and 7 men.

And included:

- A mixture of employment statuses including people who worked full-time, part-time and were retired.
- Some people with children and others without.
- A mixture of marital status'.

The remainder of this document reproduces the questions as they were asked, provides a brief summary of respondents' key comments, and, at the end of each section, makes recommendations for revising questions. Due to the tight turn around the summary of issues is fairly brief but further clarification on issues around particular questions can be provided if necessary.

### **What is cognitive interviewing?**

Cognitive interviewing is a technique which allows us to study the way in which respondents understand, mentally process and respond to the questions we present to them. We test a range of target questions that may pose difficulties or proved problematic in earlier pilots. The respondent is asked a survey question but the focus is on the mental processes gone through to answer that question. Cognitive interviewing allows to us explore several issues which include:

- interpretation of a question and particular terms
- recall and estimation strategies
- comfort level with answering
- confidence in accuracy of answer

**SECTION A – Dental health**

**SHOW CARD A1**

**A1** Adults can have up to 32 natural teeth but over time people lose some of them. How many natural teeth, including crowns have you got?

No natural teeth	1	<b>GO TO A7</b>
Fewer than 20 natural teeth	2	<b>GO TO A2</b>
Between 10 and 19 natural teeth	3	
20 or more natural teeth	4	
(Don't know)	5	

**IF A1 CODED 2-5**

**A2** Are you happy with the appearance of your teeth at present?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO A3</b>
No	2	

**A3** Do you have any toothache or pain in your mouth?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO A4</b>
No	2	

**A4** Do you have any problems or difficulties biting or chewing food?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO A5</b>
No	2	

**A5** Do your gums bleed when you eat or brush your teeth?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO A6</b>
No	2	

**A6** If you went to the dentist tomorrow, do you think you would need treatment?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO A7</b>
No	2	
(Don't know)	3	

**A7** Have you ever had any kind of denture? (False teeth which you can take out) IF YES: is that currently or in the past?

Yes – currently have	1	<b>GO TO A8</b>
Yes – have had in past	2	<b>GO TO A10</b>
No	3	

**IF A7 CODED 1**

**A8 SHOW CARD A8**

What kind of denture do you have? (CODE ALL THAT APPLY)

- Full upper denture
- Full lower denture
- Partial upper denture
- Lower partial denture

1	<b>GO TO A9</b>
2	
3	
4	

**A9** Do you wear your denture?

- Yes
- No

1	<b>GO TO A10</b>
2	

**A10 SHOW CARD A10**

About how long ago was your last visit to the dentist?

- Less than a year ago
- More than 1 year, up to 2 years ago
- More than 2 years, up to 5 years ago
- More than 5 years ago
- Never been to the dentist
- (Don't know)

1	<b>GO TO A11</b>
2	
3	
4	
5	<b>GO TO A14</b>
8	<b>GO TO A11</b>

**IF A10 CODED 1-4 or 8**

**A11** Did you get your treatment on the NHS or was it private?

- NHS
- Private
- Both
- (Don't know)

1	<b>GO TO A12</b>
2	
3	
4	

**A12** We would like to find out how you FEEL about attending the dentist. Please indicate which of the following applies to you most. A visit to the dentist is...READ OUT...

- ...not scary at all,
- scary to some extent,
- Or very scary?

1	<b>GO TO A13</b>
2	
3	

**A13** **SHOW CARD A13**  
 When visiting the dentist, do any of the things listed on this card apply to you?  
 (CODE ALL THAT APPLY)

Difficulty in getting time off work	1	<b>GO TO A14</b>
Difficulty in getting an appointment that suits me	2	
Dental treatment too expensive	3	
Long way to go to the dentist	4	
I have not found a dentist I like	5	
I cannot get dental treatment under the NHS	6	
I have difficulty in getting access, e.g. steps, wheelchair access	7	
Other reason (WRITE IN) _____	8	

**A14** **SHOW CARD A14**  
 Which, if any, of the items on this card do you do **daily** to improve your dental and oral health?  
 (CODE ALL THAT APPLY)

Clean my teeth with a toothbrush	1	<b>GO TO PROBES</b>
Use a fluoride toothpaste	2	
Use dental floss	3	
Use a mouth rinse	4	
Restrict my intake of sugary foods and drinks	5	
Clean my dentures	6	
Leave my dentures out at night	7	
None of these	8	

## **SECTION A: Recommendations**

### **A1**

There was concern that not all respondents had picked up the first part of the question on the number of teeth that adults can have.

Recommendation – Put '32' in bold so the interviewer will put extra emphasis on this. Also propose that the first sentence is put on the showcard.

### **A2**

Some respondents seemed unclear about how they should answer this question and needed to be pressed for a yes or no answer.

Recommendation – Amend question text to 'How happy or unhappy are you with the appearance of your teeth at present?' Change response options to: Very happy/fairly happy /fairly unhappy/very unhappy

### **A3**

Some people who answered 'yes' here seemed to be thinking of the last week or few weeks even if they weren't experiencing pain at the time of the interview. It was also the case that a respondent said 'no' even though they had toothache two weeks prior to the interview.

Recommendation – Amend question text to 'Have you had any toothache or pain in your mouth within the last month?'

### **A4**

There was concern about whether sensitivity should be included here. This made it difficult to give a definite yes/no answer.

Recommendation – Add the following interviewer note: 'If asked, please include problems with biting or chewing food because of sensitive teeth.' Add a showcard and amend answer options to:

Yes, often

Yes, occasionally

No, never

### **A5**

Some people spontaneously said 'occasionally' at this question rather than yes or no. Researcher also raised question about bleeding after flossing.

Recommendation – Clarify with client if we are interested in flossing. If so, amend question text to '...eat, brush your teeth or floss'. Add showcard and amend answer options to:

Yes, often

Yes, occasionally

No, never

### **A6/A7/A8**

There were no issues around these questions

### **A9**

At this question some respondents felt the need to clarify exactly when they wear their denture e.g. all day but take it out at night, wear it 24 hours etc.

Recommendation - These findings also made researchers wonder if some people wear their dentures, some, but not all of the time. Is this something you are interested in finding out?

### **A10**

There were no issues around this questions

### **A11**

There was some confusion around whether it was NHS if they paid for treatment.

Recommendation – Add the following interviewer note:

Most people are required to pay something towards treatment on the NHS but there are some exceptions. Expectant or nursing mothers or those receiving family tax credit, income support or incapacity benefit are entitled to free dental care on the NHS.

### **A12**

For some respondents the anticipation of going to the dentist was much worse than actually being there. The client has clarified that the interest is with an intended or actual visit to the dentist.

After probing it was apparent that some people tended to frame their response to this question using words like 'anxious,' 'nervous', 'apprehensive'.

The client proposed that the question is changed to:

*'We would like to find out how you FEEL about attending the dentist. Please indicate which of the following applies to you most. A visit the dentist is ...READ OUT*

*I don't feel nervous at all*

*I feel nervous to some extent*

*I feel very nervous*

*dont know*

Recommendation – The new answer categories don't match the current question text. Propose that the question is amended to:

Which of the options on this card best describe how you feel about visiting the dentist?

I don't feel nervous at all

I feel a bit nervous

I feel very nervous

(Don't know) Propose that this is not on the showcard

### **A13**

Issue around how someone who could not actually get a dentist would code their answer here. It was not clear why respondent did not choose option 6.

Recommendation – Review after main pilot

### **A14**

At this question there was some confusion over whether toothpaste used was fluoride or not. There was also a tendency among some respondents to code 1 and not 2 even though they did also use toothpaste. This is probably because for the majority of people these two actions go hand in hand. If the word 'clean' was amended to 'brush' for option 1 this might help. There was also an issue around people not choosing option 6 when they did in fact soak their dentures with a tablet daily.

Recommendations:

- Reverse order of options 1 and 2.
- Amend 'clean my teeth with a toothbrush' to 'brush my teeth with a toothbrush'
- Amend option 6 to 'Clean my dentures (including soaking with a sterilising tablet)'. Clarify with client that this is the only means of sterilising commonly used.

Feedback from client/policy customer (12/09/07)

We've decided that options 1 and 2 could be combined. For clarification - it is only cleaning with Fluoride toothpaste they are interested in. David will supply a list of non-Fluoride toothpaste as a guidance note for interviewers. It may be worthwhile putting in a check question - can I just confirm your toothpaste does have Fluoride in it.

ScotCen response

We can add a check question with yes/no/not sure as answer options. We suspect that a lot of people will not know whether it is fluoride toothpaste or not. Any list would need to be able to fit on the interviewers screen. Any list would need to include supermarket own brands etc so could end up being quite long and not fit on to the interviewers screen.

Client and policy contact to decide if they want to go with ScotCen's suggestion of keeping options 1 and 2 but reversing the order (see recommendations) or combine 1 and 2. A check question can be added for either option.

**SECTION B: Disability/long-standing illness**

**B1**

Over the last 12 months (that is since August/September 2006) would you say your health has, on the whole, been...READ OUT...

...very good,	1	<b>GO TO B2</b>
good,	2	
fair,	3	
bad, or	4	
very bad?	5	

**B2**

**Show card B2**

Do you have any long-term condition or conditions, including disability or a long-standing illness? By long-term condition I mean anything that has troubled you, or is likely to affect you, for 12 months or more. By disability as opposed to ill-health, I mean a physical or mental impairment.

Yes, disability only	1	<b>GO TO B3</b>
Yes, Long-term illness or health problem only	2	
Yes, both disability and long-term illness or health problem	3	
No, neither	4	

**B3**

Now I'd like you to think about the **two weeks** ending yesterday. During those two weeks did you have to cut down on any of the things you **used to be able to do** about the house or at (school/work) or in your free time because of (a condition you have just told me about or some other) illness or injury?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO B4</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO PROBES</b>

**IF B3 CODED 1**

**B4**

How many days was this in all during these 2 weeks, including Saturdays and Sundays?

Enter number of days

## Section B: Disability/long-standing illness

### B1

No issues raised in the cognitive interviewing. Julie and Catherine have agreed how to proceed with this question.

### B2

There was quite a bit of discussion around this question at the debrief. Issues raised by the interviews included:

- Would long-term injuries be considered long-term conditions?
- The question text defines a long-term condition as something that has been troubling someone for 12 months or more. Researchers probed respondents further on their understanding of 'long-term condition' including asking them how long they thought someone needed to have a condition before they would consider it to be a 'long-term' one. Feedback varied and for some respondents the time period was longer than 12 months. This suggests that not all respondents are picking up on the time period (12 months) specified in the question text.
- It was clear that some respondents had difficulty deciding if their health problem was a disability or a long-term condition. We understand from the client that there is a desire to be able to separate the two so this is clearly important.

The researchers also observed that answer options don't match the question text. For example, question text talks about 'conditions' but this is not mentioned in the answer, in addition, 'health problem' is mentioned in answer category 2 but is not mentioned in the question text.

### Recommendations:

Split the question in two with the aim of the first question being to establish if the respondent has a long-term health problem or disability. The second question would then establish which of these it is. Suggested question wording along the lines of:

'Do you have any long-term health problem, illness or disability? By long-term, I mean something likely to affect you for 12 months or more.' Yes/No/DK

### IF YES

And is that a disability, another long-term health problem or illness or both? By disability, I mean a physical or mental impairment. Showcard with the following option:

Disability only

Other long-term health problem or illness only

Disability and other long-term health problem

We also have some concerns about the current definition of disability – it was not clear respondents were easily able to distinguish which conditions should come under this (e.g. suggestion that 'being a bit stressed' would come under mental impairment).

### Client suggestion for pilot

### **LongIII**

Do you have a longstanding physical or mental condition or disability that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months? Yes/No

**IF LongIII=(1) THEN**

**FOR i=1 to 6 DO**

**IF (i = 1) OR (More[i - 1] = Yes) THEN**

*Records up to six long-standing illnesses*

**(IllsM[i])**

What (*else*) is the matter with you?

INTERVIEWER: RECORD FULLY. PROBE FOR DETAIL.

IF MORE THAN ONE MENTIONED, ENTER ONE HERE ONLY.

Text: Maximum 60 characters

**IF (i < 6) THEN**

**LimitAct [i]**

Does this condition or disability limit your activities in any way?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**More[i]**

(Can I check) do you have any other longstanding condition or disability?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

ScotCen response

We don't think any of the suggestions (ours included) get around the issue of people not knowing whether their problem is a disability, a long-term condition or both. Happy to revisit after pilot but perhaps Catherine and Julie can discuss on 13<sup>th</sup> September.

**B3**

One issue was how someone who had a problem which had recently improved but was not fully back to normal would answer this question. Is the interest here in recent deterioration or just whether people have a limiting condition? If it is the latter wording needs to be more like 'During the last **2 weeks** have you been prevented from doing any of the things you **normally** do because of...'

Update from client

I've checked and the suggested change was from the Long Term Conditions Alliance. It seems that they've (and we've) misunderstood the point of this question, as identifying limiting illness rather than acute sickness. Happy to revert to original question for this

ScotCen response

Revert to original question

**SECTION C – Access and contact with GP practices**

**C1**

Have you contacted or tried to contact your doctors' practice to see your GP or another health professional in the last year?

Yes	1	GO TO PROBES
No	2	GO TO C2

**C2**

**IF C1 CODED 2  
SHOW CARD C2**

Why did you not contact your GP in the last year?

Not registered with a GP locally	1	Go to PROBES
Didn't have any health problems in the year	2	
Had health problems, but treated myself	3	
Had health problems, and got advice from pharmacist	4	
Had health problems, but saw other professional privately	5	
Had health problems, but ignored them	6	
Problem occurred when surgery was closed, and didn't need help by the time it opened	7	
Problem occurred when surgery was closed, and went to hospital or clinic	8	
Phoned NHS 24 and got advice or treatment – when GP surgery was closed	9	
Phoned NHS 24 and got advice or treatment - when GP surgery was open	10	
Didn't think it was worth contacting GP as it's too difficult to get appointments	11	

## SECTION C:

### C1

The term 'your GP' confused some respondents who did not always see their named GP. Some people attended primary care clinics e.g. asthma clinic but were unsure whether to include this or not. Some people were also thinking about a longer time period than a year when answering the question.

#### Recommendations:

Change wording from 'your GP' to 'a GP'. Put 'doctors' practice' in bold. Change 'last year' to 'last 12 months, that is since (month of interview) (year before interview) e.g. September 2006

### C2

Issues with number and complexity of options on card possibly leading respondents to choose the wrong option. For example, a respondent who had broken their foot and therefore gone to hospital rather than their GP chose option 8 'problem occurred when surgery close and went to hospital or clinic' in spite of fact that they did not know if the surgery was closed or not and that this was irrelevant to their decision to go to A&E. There was also evidence that length and similarity between some of the options confused/distracted respondents from choosing the right one.

#### Recommendations:

Review list and shorten individual answer options and possibly number of answer options. Clarify with client the origin of the answer categories and how interested they are in some of the more subtle distinctions between options and then advise appropriately.

Additional comment from client (12<sup>th</sup> Sept)

C2 Problem of contacting hospital when surgery open won't arise as hospital visit will be collected in other questions? Please confirm.

Response – Even though information on hospital visits is collected elsewhere there is still an issue here around how some respondents code their answer here. (See example of A&E case above). Client to discuss with policy customer.

**SECTION D: Environmental impact on health**

**D1**

**SHOW CARD D1**

During the past 4 weeks have you made use of any of the places listed on this card for physical activity including walking. IF YES: Which ones?

Local woodland or wooded park	1	
Local park or open space	2	
On country paths	3	
Beach/sea-shore	4	
Riverside/loch/canal	5	
Sports fields or outdoor courts	6	
Swimming pool	7	
Gym or sports centre	8	
On pavements / roads	9	
Playground [for children only]	10	
At home	11	
Other – please specify	12	
No, none of these	13	

**FOR FIRST THREE ANSWERS GIVEN ASK:**

**D2**

How many days in the last 4 weeks did you make use of (insert name of place used) for physical activity including walking

**Write in number of days**

		<b>Go to D3 if any more places used</b>
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**D3**

How many days in the last 4 weeks did you make use of (insert name of place used) for physical activity including walking

**Write in number of days**

		<b>Go to D4 if any more places used</b>
--	--	---

**D4**

How many days in the last 4 weeks did you make use of (insert name of place used) for physical activity including walking

**Write in number of days**

		<b>GO TO PROBES</b>
--	--	---------------------

## SECTION D:

For the purposes of the cognitive interview we only followed up on the first 3 places. For the pilot and mainstage we will follow-up for all places mentioned.

- There was some confusion on whether or not places they had been with family should be included or not.
- Option 11 'At home' seemed to confuse people. They weren't sure what physical activity at home meant. Would this include things like washing up, taking out the bins etc. We are assuming that things like yoga at home would be included here. Would walking to shops/appointment etc be included – evidence that some people may not class this as an 'activity' but just a means of getting somewhere.
- Researchers commented on use of word 'local' in first two options. What if they woodland walk in neighbouring region?
- Researchers also queried what a 'wooded park' means.

### Recommendations:

- Amend wording to 'During the past 4 weeks have you **personally** made use of....'
- Suggest we include a definition of physical activity or people may answer in different ways. To discuss appropriate definition with client.
- Consider whether definition of physical activity removes need for further clarification of 'at home' option.
- Change option 1 to 'Woodland'.
- Change option 2 to 'Park or open space'
- Combine options 4 and 5
- Change option 9 to 'pavements and streets' (We query need for 'local' for same reason as above).

Additional comment from client (12/09/07)

D1 I'll raise the problem of definition of local and of the difference between local wooded park and local park with policy customer. Also - I wonder if the physical activity definition problem won't arise since in the real survey lots of physical activities questions will already have been asked and presumably a definition will already have been given.

ScotCen response – The questions in the physical activity block are very detailed and there are separate questions for housework; heavy housework; gardening DIY etc; a continuous walk that lasted at least 10 minutes. With the exception of walking, no definition or time period for any of these activities is specified. One option is to use the following definition which is used in the child's physical activity block:

'During the past 4 weeks have you made use of any of the places listed on this card for walking, sports, exercise or other active things?'

Action - Client and policy contact to confirm if happy to pilot this suggestion.

**SECTION E – Asthma module**

**E1**

Did a doctor ever tell you that you had asthma?

EXCLUDE HOMEOPATHS ETC

Yes	1	<b>GO TO E2</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO SECTION F</b>

**IF E1 CODED 1**

**SHOW CARD E2**

**E2a**

Have you ever received any treatment or advice for your *asthma* from any of the people on this card?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO b</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO PROBES</b>

**b**

Which ones? PROBE: Any others?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

A general practitioner (GP)	1	<b>GO TO E3</b>
Nurse at GP surgery/Health centre	2	
Community, School or District Nurse	3	
Hospital casualty/Accident and Emergency department	4	
Consultant/Specialist or other doctor at hospital outpatients	5	
Consultant/Specialist or other doctor elsewhere	6	
Homeopath	7	
Acupuncturist	8	
Other alternative medicine professional (WRITE IN _____)	9	
None of these	10	<b>GO TO PROBES</b>

**SHOW CARD E3**

Now I'd like to talk about the type of treatment and advice you have received from these people. What treatment or advice have you received for your asthma?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

**E3**

Take appropriate exercise	1	
Avoid known allergens or triggers (e.g. pollen, animals, other people's cigarette smoke)	2	
Advice or treatment to stop smoking	3	
Avoid extreme temperatures	4	
Medication (including inhaler) use	5	
Advice or treatment to lose weight	6	
Other treatment or advice (WRITE IN _____)	7	
None of these	8	<b>GO TO PROBES</b>

E4

Has this treatment or advice included a personal asthma action plan?

Yes	1	<b>GO TO PROBES</b>
No	2	
Don't know/Can't remember	3	

**SECTION E:  
ASTHMA:**

No respondents had asthma. Currently trying to recruit through GP asthma clinics but failing this we will test the question on people known to the research team.

**SECTION F: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease**

<b>F1</b>	Have you ever had chronic bronchitis or emphysema?	Yes	1	<b>Go to F2</b>
		No	2	<b>GO TO PROBES</b>
<b>IF F1 CODED 1</b>				
<b>F2</b>	You said that you had (chronic bronchitis / emphysema). Were you told by a doctor that you had (chronic bronchitis and/or emphysema)?	Yes	1	<b>Go to F3</b>
		No	2	<b>Go to F4</b>
<b>IF F2 CODED 1</b>				
<b>F3</b>	Did your doctor do a spirometry test (a test measuring how much air you could blow into a machine)?	Yes	1	<b>Go to F4</b>
		No	2	
		Don't know/Can't remember	3	
<b>F4</b>	Are you currently receiving any (other) treatment or advice because of your (chronic bronchitis / emphysema)? Include regular check-ups.	Yes	1	<b>Go to F5</b>
		No	2	<b>GO TO PROBES</b>
<b>IF F4 CODED 1</b>				
<b>SHOW CARD F5</b>				
<b>F5</b>	What (other) treatment or advice are you currently receiving because of your (chronic bronchitis / emphysema)? CODE ALL THAT APPLY	Regular check-up with GP / hospital / clinic	1	<b>GO TO PROBES</b>
		Taking medication (tablets / inhalers)	2	
		Advice or treatment to stop smoking	3	
		Using oxygen	4	
		Immunisations against flu / pneumococcus	5	
		Exercise or physical activity	6	
		Advice or treatment to lose weight	7	
		Other treatment or advice	8	
		(WRITE IN _____)	9	
	None of these	9		

## **SECTION F: COPD**

Some respondents/interviewers were not clear whether an episode of bronchitis was considered chronic or not. This could result in over-reporting at this question.

Although this is not a quantitative exercise it is important to point out that one respondent had been diagnosed with COPD (Showed interviewer hospital/doctor letter) but said 'no' at F1. They talked about their condition as a lung condition and were not familiar with the terms COPD, chronic bronchitis or emphysema. This suggests that not everyone may be not be universally known/commonly used by people who have these conditions. See separate note (to follow) on issues arising from COPD groups.

### **Recommendation**

Discuss findings from COPD groups with client and policy customer.

Client/Policy customer to confirm if an interviewer note along the following lines is accurate:

If asked, do not include a one off episode of bronchitis that followed a cold

**SECTION G: NHS Health Scotland Module**

**G1**

**CARD G1**

In the past year, have you TRIED to make any of the following changes in your lifestyle to improve your health, even if only for a short time?

Cut down smoking	1	<b>GO TO G2</b>
Stop smoking	2	
Cut down the amount of alcohol I drink	3	
Be more physically active	4	
Control weight	5	
Eat more healthily	6	
Reduce level of stress	7	
Don't Know	8	<b>GO TO G3</b>
None of these	9	

**G2**

**IF G1 CODED 1-7**

CARD G1 Again

And which, if any, have you managed to maintain?

Cut down smoking	1	<b>Go to G3</b>
Stop smoking	2	
Cut down the amount of alcohol I drink	3	
Be more physically active	4	
Control weight	5	
Eat more healthily	6	
Reduce level of stress	7	
None of them	8	

**G3**

**ASK ALL**

Please could you tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statement? It's not easy to make healthy choices in my day to day life

Strongly agree	1	<b>Go to PROBES</b>
Tend to agree	2	
Tend to disagree	3	
Strongly disagree	4	
(Don't know)	8	

## **SECTION G: Health Scotland Module**

G1 and G2

No significant issues so keep as they are.

G3

Double negative was confusing.

Recommendation:

Amend question text to 'It's difficult to make healthy choices in my day to day life.'