

# Quality of life in nursing home residents with dementia and very frequent agitation, vocalizations or physical aggression.

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## Introduction

- **Agitation** is one of the neuropsychiatric symptoms that has a very high prevalence in nursing home residents with dementia.
- **Vocalizations** and **physical aggression** are expressions of agitation, and are related to distress in both the resident and the care professional.
- The aim of this study is to analyze the association between the frequency of agitation, vocalizations and physical aggression and **quality of life in nursing home residents with dementia**.

## Methods

- Cross-sectional explorative study.
  - Combined data from three studies.
- 715 nursing home residents with dementia and agitation.
  - From this group, 36% (n=257) expressed vocalizations and 32% (n=226) expressed physical aggression as assessed with the Cohen-Mansfield Agitation Inventory.
  - Mean age 83 ± 7 years; 73% female, psychotropic drug use 62%.
- Outcomes
  - Quality of life (Qualidem, 18-item version, range 0-54) with the subscales: care relationship (0-9), positive affect (0-12), negative affect (0-6), restless tense behavior (0-9), social relations (0-9), and social isolation (0-9).
- Linear mixed model analyses
  - To compare data from residents with *less frequent* agitation with those with *very frequent* agitation.

## Conclusion

- Very frequent agitation, very frequent vocalizations, and very frequent physical aggression were all associated with lower quality of life scores.
- Separately, these neuropsychiatric symptoms were associated with different quality of life domains.
- In daily care practice, distinguishing between the different expressions of agitation is relevant in relation to quality of life of residents.

## Results

### Agitation

8% of the residents with agitation (n=54) expressed *very frequent* agitation.

*Very frequent* agitation was associated with:

- lower scores on five out of six Qualidem subscales: 'care relationship', 'positive affect', 'negative affect', 'restless tense behavior' and 'social isolation' (Figure 1).

### Vocalizations

34% of the residents with vocalizations (n=87) expressed *very frequent* vocalizations.

*Very frequent* vocalizations were associated with:

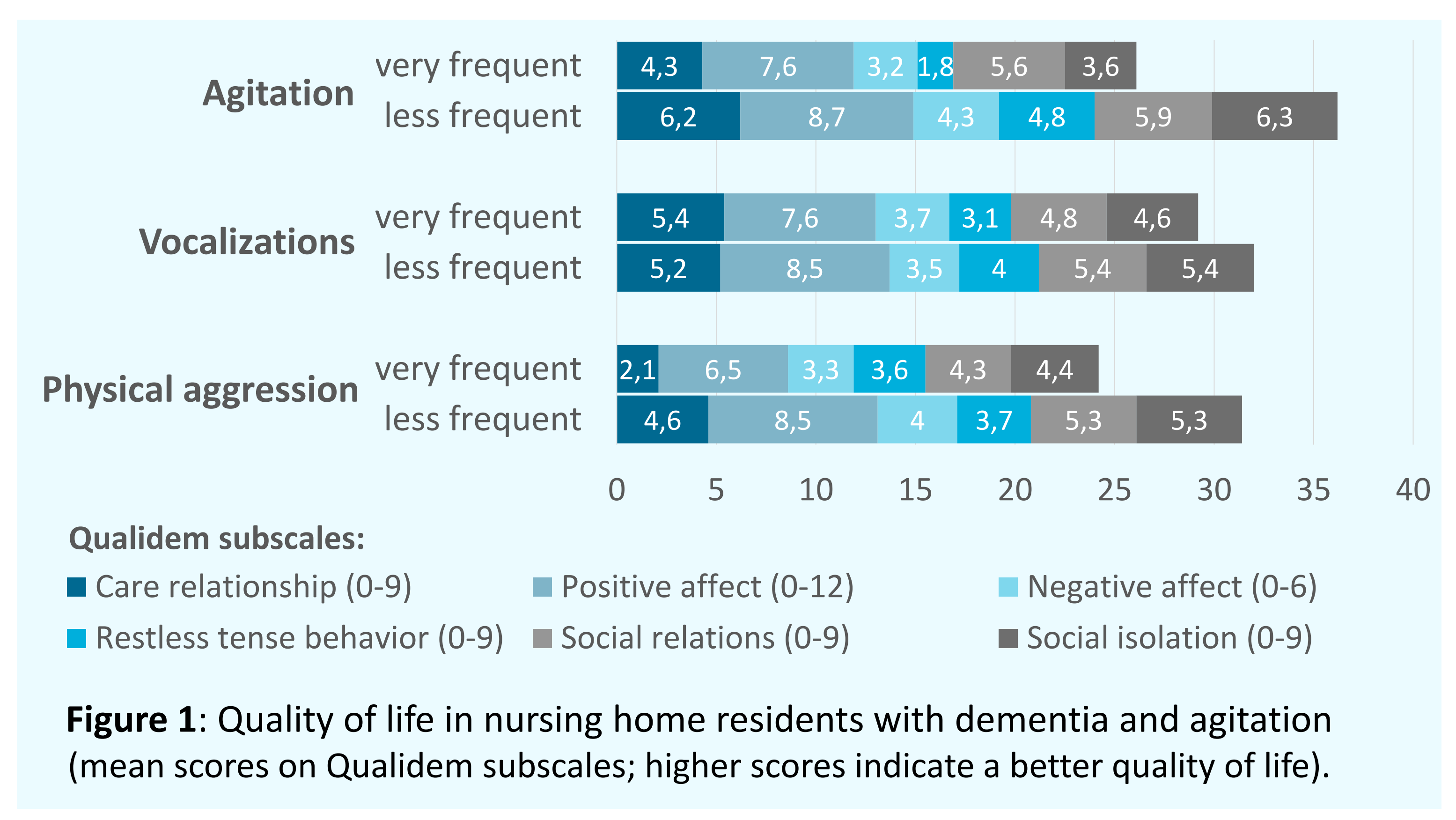
- lower scores on four Qualidem subscales: 'positive affect', 'restless tense behavior', 'social relations' and 'social isolation' (Figure 1).

### Physical aggression

7% of the residents with physical aggression (n=16) expressed *very frequent* physical aggression.

*Very frequent* physical aggression was associated with:

- lower scores on two Qualidem subscales: 'care relationship' and 'positive affect' (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Quality of life in nursing home residents with dementia and agitation (mean scores on Qualidem subscales; higher scores indicate a better quality of life).



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