

# Good Questions

Issue One: Happy New Year

January 2007

## How happy is your 'Happy New Year'?

*"Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success"*  
Albert Schweitzer

A common greeting at this time of year – given and received with utmost sincerity. But, have you stopped to think about what happiness is and how you can achieve it this year? And how will you know if you are happier this year than you were last year?

It is widely acknowledge that money can't buy happiness and that happiness is more than the mere absence of anxiety and depression. It is generally considered a predictor of behaviour – people with high levels of happiness tend to think, evaluate, decide and respond to situations more positively than those with lower levels. However, as a society, it appears that we are less happy with our lives than we were a generation or two ago. But why is that? If you are happy, is that sufficient? Social scientists would argue that happiness is a transient state (i.e. short bursts of pleasant emotions and moods) that needs to be balanced with other elements of positive mental health, e.g. resilience, optimism, self-esteem. But which of these elements are most important for achieving positive mental health? And can we measure it?

AHP Research has recently completed three projects on the theme of positive mental health (PMH) commissioned by [NHS Health Scotland](#) to assess what constitutes positive mental health, how we can measure it, and how other countries are measuring it.

These projects took the form of:

- Review of specific mental health and well-being literature
- Review of scales of positive mental health validated for use with adults in the UK:
  - a technical report
  - a guide for practitioners (part 5 of the "Mental Health Improvement: Evidence and Practice" series)
- Review of data on the mental health and well-being of adults collected in national (excluding Scotland) and cross-national surveys

...continued on page 2

## Developing a PRO strategy

One of the projects we conducted for NHS Health Scotland was to identify and critically appraise scales that might be used for the evaluation of positive mental health. Our team has a wealth of experience in the appropriate selection and interpretation of patient reported outcome (PRO) instruments. If you are considering including PRO instruments in a forthcoming study or trial, please contact us. We would be happy to discuss developing a PRO strategy to meet your requirements.

Please visit our website for details about our [consultancy](#) and [research](#) services.

### Inside this issue:

How happy is your 'Happy New Year'?	1
Developing a PRO strategy	1
You ask the questions...	2
Forthcoming events	2

## How happy is your 'Happy New Year'?

(cont. from page 1)



These projects will be used to inform a core set of national, sustainable mental health indicators for Scotland, to provide a way of monitoring positive mental health at a national level.

Such indicators are vital to the development of a comprehensive health monitoring system concerned not only with minimising mental health problems (among a minority) but also

with promoting positive mental health (for the majority). If you would like to receive further information about these projects or to receive notification when these reports are published, please [contact us](#)

As Albert Schweitzer once said: "Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success". So, the next time someone wishes you a Happy New Year, give some thought to what that means for you.

## Training Courses

AHP research offers various training courses for healthcare professionals and outcomes researchers.

In the first half of 2007, we will be running the following open courses:

- Critical appraisal skills
- Appropriate selection and interpretation of patient reported outcomes (PRO) measures
- Social context in clinical research

Please [contact us](#) for further details, including dates and locations.

We also run in-house courses at the request of our clients, including:

- Communicating with patients
- Introduction to clinical research
- Issues in trial design
- Evaluating interventions
- Introduction to psychometric validation
- Informing best practice through patient involvement

Courses can be delivered to groups at our own training centre or at our clients' premises.

We welcome suggestions for the development of additional courses of interest. Please e-mail your suggestions to:

[matthew.reaney@ahpresearch.com](mailto:matthew.reaney@ahpresearch.com).

### Forthcoming events:

14 - 16 March 2007

Diabetes UK Annual Professional Meeting: Glasgow

20 - 22 April 2007

PsychoSocial Aspects of Diabetes (PSAD) 12th Spring Meeting: Brussels

26 April 2007

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome UK (PCOS UK) 2nd Meeting: London

## You ask the questions, we'll get the answers

If you feel that there's something else you would like to see in the e-bulletin or if you have a burning question, ask AHP. We'll find the answer and publish the best one in next month's issue. Send your questions to:

[info@ahpresearch.com](mailto:info@ahpresearch.com)