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INTRODUCTION

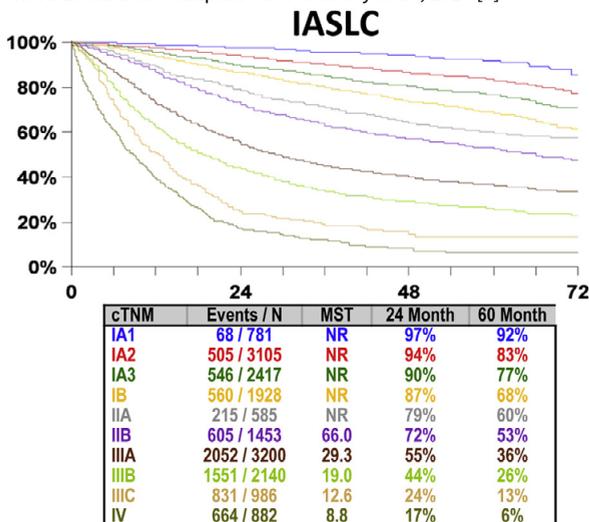
LUNG CANCER

Epidemiology

Lung cancer has the highest incidence among cancers with 2.1 million newly diagnosed patients in 2018 globally [1]. In the Netherlands, more than 13,000 patients were diagnosed with this disease in 2017 [2]. Lung cancer is also the leading cause of cancer-related mortality due to its high incidence [1] and poor prognosis [1,3,4]. An estimated number of 1.8 million persons in the world died in 2018 as a result of lung cancer, which is about three times the mortality associated with breast and colon cancer and almost five times the mortality related to prostate cancer [1]. In the Netherlands, more than 10,000 lung cancer deaths were reported in 2017 [2]. Figure 1 demonstrates the prognosis of patients with lung cancer according to the stage of disease based upon the data of the lung cancer staging project executed by the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer.

Trends in incidence and mortality of lung cancer in men and women follow the geographic, temporal, and gender-related development of the tobacco epidemic in the 20th century [6]. Incidence and mortality rates in males are declining in countries where the smoking rate in men have dropped (i.e., United Kingdom, Australia, United States, Canada). However, they increase in countries in which the tobacco epidemic started later (i.e., low- and middle-income countries in South America and Asia) [6] and in women [7].

Fig. 1 Overall survival in patients with lung cancer staged according to the eighth edition stage groups in the IASLC data set. Adapted from Chansky et al., 2017 [5]



cTNM, clinically staged tumors

Abbreviations: IASLC, International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer; N, number of patients; MST, median survival time (months)

Etiology

Multiple risk factors contribute to the development of lung cancer. Smoking is responsible for 85% of lung cancer cases [8] and is considered to be the most important risk factor [8-10]. Men and women who smoke have a 23 and 13 times higher chance to develop lung cancer compared to non-smokers [9,10] with the duration of smoking and the intensity of smoking significantly related to the risk of developing lung cancer [11,12]. Most patients with lung cancer are male with the highest risk to develop the disease from the age of sixty years or older [13]. In addition, women who smoke have a higher risk for lung cancer than males [14]. Passive smoking results in an increased risk for (lung) cancer as well [15]. Although, other causes of lung cancer are known, like exposure to ionizing radiation (e.g., radon [16-18], radiotherapy [19,20], and the radiation caused by atomic bombs [21]), asbestos [22,23], genetic predisposition [24,25], indoor air pollution [26,27], and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease [28,29], in a substantial proportion of patients causes are yet undetermined.

Clinical manifestation

About 70% of patients present with advanced-stage disease [30] with distant metastasis often occurring in bone, lung, brain, liver, adrenal glands, extra thoracic lymph nodes, and pleura/pericard [31,32]. This late-stage presentation of lung cancer may be explained by several reasons. For instance, primary tumors located in periphery of the lung and not associated with a blood vessel or airway may not demonstrate symptoms early in the course of the disease. In addition, the presence of non-specific systemic symptoms, associated with metastatic disease, may lead to a significant delay in specialist referral [33]. Lastly, lung cancer metastasizes early in its development, which also contributes to that a majority of patients is diagnosed with an advanced-stage of disease.

Histology

The uncontrolled proliferation of epithelial cells of the respiratory tract leads to the development of lung cancer [34]. A rough categorization into non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and small cell lung cancer (SCLC) can be made [35,36]. NSCLC represents 80-85% and SCLC 10-15% of the cases [30]. SCLC and NSCLC derive their names from the microscopic morphological aspects of the tumor cells. This thesis is focused on patients with NSCLC.

Depending on the original cells that develop into cancer, four main types of lung cancer can be distinguished, including adenocarcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, large cell carcinoma, and neuroendocrine tumors. The latter includes SCLC and large cell neuroendocrine carcinoma [37,34,36]. Discrimination between these types and categories of lung cancer is of importance given the consequences for treatment and survival.

Adenocarcinomas develop from epithelial cells of the lower respiratory tract and are mostly located in the periphery of the lung [34,36]. Histologically, these tumors may

demonstrate a lepidic, acinar, papillary, or micropapillary growth pattern. Solid adenocarcinoma show sheets of cells that lack the mentioned growth patterns [36]. The nuclei are located in the periphery of the cytoplasm with prominent nucleoli [36]. Glandular arrangements of cells may demonstrate highly variable morphological features [34,36]. Immunohistochemical markers expressed by cells of adenocarcinomas are TTF-1 and TTF-1 and/or Napsin A [34-36].

According to the degree of differentiation, squamous cell carcinomas are tumors that demonstrate intracellular bridging and keratinization. In addition, undifferentiated carcinomas that express markers of squamous cell differentiation are also part of these group of tumors [36]. Squamous cell carcinomas are often centrally located in a lobar or main bronchus [34]. They consist of a proliferation of atypical polygonal cells that invade desmoplastic stroma as single cells or solid nests and trabeculae [34,36]. Keratinization of the cytoplasm of these cells is often focal in tumors. Nuclei and nucleoli do not have prominent features. In these tumors inflammation and necrosis is often present [36]. Markers that are frequently used for immunohistochemistry are CK 5 and 6 and p63 or p40 [34,36]. In squamous cell carcinoma TTF-1 should be negative [36].

Large cell carcinomas are part of the group of undifferentiated non-small cell carcinomas [34]. Cells are cohesive and demonstrate evident malignant cytological features [36]. Tumors demonstrate sheets or nests of large polygonal cells with vesicular nuclei and prominent nucleoli with moderate cytoplasm [34,36]. Specimens should not demonstrate morphologic or immunohistochemical characteristics of other tumors [34,36].

Small cell carcinomas belong to the group of the neuroendocrine tumors [38]. They often present as bulky disease due to extensive hilar and mediastinal lymph node involvement [34]. At tissue level, small cell carcinomas consist of small to medium sized cells with scant cytoplasm and with round to spindled nuclei without prominent nucleoli [34,36]. The cells demonstrate a sheet-like growth pattern. A nested or trabecular pattern, peripheral palisading or rosette formation is less common. Necrosis is often present [34,36]. Napsin A is negative in all neuroendocrine tumors. TTF-1, chromogranin A, synaptophysin and NCAM/ CD-56 may be positive [34,36].

Large cell neuroendocrine carcinomas demonstrate histologic characteristics of neuroendocrine morphology (e.g., nested, trabecular, rosette-like, and peripheral palisading growth patterns) and neuroendocrine markers [36]. They are typically situated in peripheral regions of the upper lobes [34] and often demonstrate necrosis [37]. Cells are large and atypical with prominent nucleoli and abundant cytoplasm [34,36]. Mitosis are counted more than 10 per mm² [34,36]. Tumors are positive for markers NCAM/CD56, chromogranin A, synaptophysin [34,36].

Table 1. TNM 7th edition for staging lung cancer. Adapted from: Goldstraw et al., 2007 [40].

T (primary tumor)	
TX	Primary tumor cannot be assessed, or tumor proven by the presence of malignant cells in sputum or bronchial washings but not visualized by imaging or bronchoscopy
T0	No evidence of primary tumor
Tis	Carcinoma in situ
T1	Tumor \leq 3 cm in greatest dimension, surrounded by lung or visceral pleura, without bronchoscopic evidence of invasion more proximal than the lobar bronchus (i.e., not in the main bronchus)
T1a	Tumor \leq 2 cm in greatest dimension
T1b	Tumor $>$ 2cm but \leq 3 cm in greatest dimension
T2	Tumor $>$ 3cm but \leq 7 cm or tumor with any of the following features (T2 tumors with these features are classified T2a if \leq 5 cm): involves main bronchus, \geq 2 cm distal to the carina invades visceral pleura associated with atelectasis or obstructive pneumonitis that extends to the hilar region but does not involve the entire lung
T2a	Tumor $>$ 3cm but \leq 5 cm in greatest dimension
T2b	Tumor $>$ 5cm but \leq 7 cm in greatest dimension
T3	Tumor $>$ 7 cm or one that directly invades any of the following: chest wall (including superior sulcus tumors), diaphragm, phrenic nerve, mediastinal pleura, parietal pericardium or tumor in the main bronchus 2cm distal to the carina but without involvement of the carina or associated atelectasis or obstructive pneumonitis of the entire lung or separate tumor nodule(s) in the same lobe
T4	Tumor of any size that invades any of the following: mediastinum, heart, great vessels, trachea, recurrent laryngeal nerve, esophagus, vertebral body, carina; separate tumor nodule(s) in a different ipsilateral lobe
N (Regional lymph nodes)	
NX	Regional lymph nodes cannot be assessed
N0	No regional lymph node metastasis
N1	Metastasis in ipsilateral peribronchial and/or ipsilateral hilar lymph nodes and intrapulmonary nodes, including involvement by direct extension
N2	Metastasis in ipsilateral mediastinal and/or subcarinal lymph node(s)
N3	Metastasis in contralateral mediastinal, contralateral hilar, ipsilateral or contralateral scalene, or supraclavicular lymph node(s)
Distant metastasis	
M0	No distant metastasis
M1	Distant metastasis
M1a	Separate tumor nodule(s) in a contralateral lobe; tumor with pleural nodules or malignant pleural (or pericardial) effusion
M1b	Distant metastasis

Staging

The International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASCL) has developed a Tumor Node Metastasis (TNM) staging system to stage lung cancer. Staging of lung cancer is of importance as treatment and prognosis is determined according to the stage of disease. Recently, the eight edition of this system was introduced to stage newly diagnosed lung cancer in patients [39]. However, patients described in this thesis are still staged according to the IASCL TNM 7th edition (Tables 1 and 2) [40-42]. For most of the studies in this thesis, the aim was to include patients with advanced-stage disease (i.e., stage IIIB and IV according to TNM 7th edition). Although in TNM 8th edition stage IIIB is divided into stage IIIB and IIIC and stage IV is divided into stage IV A and IV B, this aim to include patients with advanced-stage disease is still assured.

Table 2. Stages according to TNM 7th edition. Adapted from: Goldstraw et al., 2007 [40]

T and M stage	N stage			
	N0	N1	N2	N3
T1a,b	IA	IIA	IIIA	IIIB
T2a	IB	IIA	IIIA	IIIB
T2b	IIA	IIB	IIIA	IIIB
T3	IIB	IIIA	IIIA	IIIB
T4	IIIA	IIIA	IIIB	IIIB
M1a	IV	IV	IV	IV
M1b	IV	IV	IV	IV

Treatment

This paragraph discusses the therapy options available for patients with NSCLC. As patients with SCLC were not included in the studies of this thesis, treatment for this patient group will not be discussed.

Treatment for lung cancer depends on disease stage and patient and disease-related factors (e.g., performance score, comorbidity, type of tumor). Some patients with lung cancer can be treated with curative intent with surgery, radiotherapy, platinum-based chemotherapy or a combination of these modalities (i.e., patients with stage I to III disease). A surgical resection of the tumor (e.g., lobectomy, segmentectomy) combined with a mediastinal lymphadenectomy is, in general, the treatment modality of choice for patients with stage I and II disease [43,44]. It is recommended to treat patients after a surgical resection with adjuvant chemotherapy in case of stage II disease [45,46,43,44], unexpected positive N2 lymph node(s) [43], resectable locally advanced NSCLC with single station N2 disease [43,47], or if the resection of the tumor is irradical [44]. Patients that are not able to receive surgery, for instance due to low performance status or compromised lung function, can be treated with stereotactic radiotherapy [48,43,44].

Patients with stage III disease are recommended to be treated with concurrent chemoradiotherapy over sequential chemoradiotherapy [49,50,43,44]. In those patients compromised by decreased performance status, older age or comorbidities sequential chemoradiotherapy may be preferred [43].

Despite the above mentioned curative options, even in stage I lung cancer metastatic disease does develop often as micro metastatic disease, which remains undiagnosed with present staging methods, or local disease was not cured by the original intervention. Moreover, the majority of patients are diagnosed with advanced-stage disease at first presentation and cannot be treated with curative intent. Treatment in these patients is often confined to platinum-based chemotherapy and associated with small survival benefits [51-53]. However, novel therapies, such as the first, second, and third generation of Endothelial Growth Factor Receptor tyrosine kinase inhibitors [54-58], Anaplastic Lymphoma Kinase inhibitors [59-62], and more recently Programmed Death-1 and Programmed Death-Ligand 1 inhibitors [63-66] have demonstrated significant improvement in progression free and overall survival in patient with NSCLC. It is recommended for patients with an targetable genetic abnormality to start with first line treatment with protein kinase inhibitors directed against this abnormality [44,56,60,67-73]. In addition to the screening for mutations, PD-L1 status of the tumor should be determined. In the absence of mutations and depending on PD-L1 expression, recently PD-L1 inhibitors as monotherapy or PD-1/PD-L1 inhibitors in combination with chemotherapy have been registered as first line treatment [44,67,74].

Besides the poor prognosis of advanced-stage disease, lung cancer and treatment-related adverse events can have a considerable impact on a patient's well-being [75]. Therefore, prolongation of survival with the preservation of a patient's well-being is an important goal of treatment [76].

PATIENT REPORTED OUTCOMES IN LUNG CANCER

Patients' well-being can be evaluated with the use of patient reported outcomes (PROs). A PRO reflects a patient's subjective perceptions and evaluation of elements related to their health and well-being. This information can primarily be provided by the patient and often not obtained by other means [77]. Evaluation of PROs is increasingly incorporated [78-86] and recommended [87] as an outcome parameter in (lung) cancer. Clinical trials investigating new therapies include PROs alongside the traditional endpoints of treatment (i.e., response and overall and progression free survival) to monitor the effects of treatment on patients well-being and to facilitate drug approval and legislation. However, although it is often claimed that Quality of Life (QoL) is incorporated, Health Status (HS) or Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) are the concepts that are usually assessed in

studies, [76,85,79,82,78,81,86]. In contrast, in clinical practice patients' distress is often evaluated instead of HS, HRQoL, or QoL.

Besides the assessment of distress, HS, and HRQoL, it may be worthwhile to evaluate patients' Quality of Life (QoL) and feelings about their treatment. Insight in patients' QoL, expectations of treatment, feelings about side effects, and satisfaction with therapy may be of importance upon making treatment decisions and to monitor the impact of side effects on patients. The next sections will discuss the conceptualization and characteristics of these constructs, their intended use, and explore the implementation of them in shared treatment decision making.

HS, HRQoL, and QoL

Although there is some overlap between HS, HRQoL and QoL, they describe different concepts.

HS is functioning orientated and refers to limitations in physical abilities, mental status, and social activities [88]. For instance, a HS measure measures walking, as a derivative of physical activity, to the extent in which a patient is (un)able to perform this ability. In lung cancer, the EuroQoL-five dimensions (EQ-5D) [89] is the most frequently used in studies. The EQ-5D can be used to monitor patients' HS over time. Moreover, whereas other instruments are primarily developed for clinical research purposes, the EQ-5D health state index is also used for economic purposes (i.e., providing information regarding resource allocation, medical effectiveness in drug approval processes).

HRQoL represents the impact of disease and treatment on the feelings patients have about their functional capabilities and well-being [88]. In this thesis, the EORTC QLQ-C30 will be used to evaluate HRQoL as it is a cancer-specific HRQoL instrument [90]. However, considering the limited items discussing HRQoL, the focus on functioning, the negatively phrasing of almost all of the individual items, the EORTC QLQ-C30 could be perceived as an instrument that measures mostly HS and to a lesser extent HRQoL. The EORTC QLQ-C30 is primarily used in research to assess the effects of cancer and treatment on patients' functioning. In this thesis, the EORTC QLQ-C30 is used to assess the impact of disease and treatment on patients.

QoL, according to the definition of the WHO, is 'an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns' [91]. 'It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs, and their relation to salient features of their environment' [91,92]. Thus, QoL evaluates patients' feelings (i.e., satisfied or bothered) about their functioning and well-being in at least three key areas (i.e., physical, psychological and social well-being). In addition, there is also room for domains like the environment (e.g., satisfaction with living conditions) or spirituality (e.g., mean-

ingfulness of personal life). HRQoL is QoL, but focusses on health. In that sense, it is less broadly defined as QoL. Moreover, HRQoL and QoL measures include negative as well as positive aspects (e.g., the possibility to meet people, to recreate or to learn new things) [88]. Considering that HS instruments do not provide information about patients' opinions and feelings, QoL measures offer additional valuable information as they ask patients to consider these. The World Health Organization Quality of Life group developed specific questionnaires to assess QoL [91-94]. In 1998, the WHOQOL-100 was published [92] and six years later an abbreviated version, the World Health Organization Quality of Life-BREF questionnaire (WHOQOL-BREF), to enable rapid assessment of QoL in epidemiological surveys and clinical studies in a wide range of disease areas [95,96].

Unfortunately, measures aimed to assess patients' QoL are not routinely utilized. It is possible that cancer researchers and physicians are not acquainted with QoL measures and their interpretation given the small amount of studies that have reported the results and use of these instruments in cancer patients. This thesis aims to enhance the knowledge of physicians, researchers, and other health care professionals about the concept, definition, and application of QoL in lung cancer. Furthermore, considering the additional value of QoL assessment in relation to HS and HRQoL, a psychometric evaluation of the WHOQOL-BREF may be necessary to stimulate the incorporation of QoL assessment in lung cancer studies and daily practice. This may facilitate the comparison of QoL outcomes between treatment arms in studies investigating new therapies in lung cancer. In addition, validation and application of the WHOQOL-BREF may also help to determine which clinical and patient-related factors are associated with QoL. Knowledge of these factors may provide opportunities to improve lung cancer patients' QoL.

Distress

Distress reflects to the psychological (i.e., cognitive, emotional), social, and spiritual experience associated with a diagnosis and treatment of cancer [97-99]. In patients with cancer, the Distress Thermometer (DT) is used to screen for distress. The DT is a visual analogue scale [97] and is often completed by patients with its associated problem list that assesses the occurrence of practical, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical problems. As such, the DT and its problem list may share, at first glance, some similarities with HRQoL. Considering that HRQoL is a factor associated with survival, it may be worthwhile to investigate if a fast and efficient instrument as the DT can provide prognostic information as well. Especially in lung cancer patients with a limited prognosis and who are prone to a decrease in HRQoL due to cancer and treatment-related adverse events, this may be of importance. Therefore, in this thesis the relation between distress and survival will be explored.

Feelings about treatment

Insight in patients' treatment-related opinions may provide physicians with opportunities to improve therapy compliance, personalize treatment, treat side effects, but also to enlarge patients' role in treatment decision making. The Cancer Therapy Satisfaction Questionnaire (CTSQ) evaluates patients' treatment perspectives by assessing their expectations of therapy, feelings about side effects, and satisfaction with therapy [100-102]. Although the CTSQ has been validated before [100,102], a psychometric study in patients treated with chemotherapy has not been performed. Considering the impact of chemotherapy-related side effects on a patient's well-being, a validation study may provide opportunities to facilitate its clinical application and to further study the use of the CTSQ in patients with lung cancer treated with chemotherapy.

PROS IN TREATMENT DECISION MAKING AND CARE MANAGEMENT

Despite their potential use in clinical practice, results of PRO (e.g., HS, HRQoL and QoL) analyses in trials are often not discussed with patients upon making treatment decisions. In addition, PROs seem to play a relatively minor role in decisions regarding adaptation or the stop of palliative chemotherapy [103]. This is unfortunate as a study investigating patient participation in treatment decision making in patients with advanced-stage lung cancer, reported that 21.9% of patients were less involved in treatment decisions than they actually preferred. Of the patients that preferred some input in doctor's decision making or shared treatment decision making, 53.1% reported this was not achieved for treatment decisions [104].

These results suggest that improvements in shared treatment decision making are required. Knowledge of patients' opinions about this process may be helpful. Several systematic reviews demonstrated that PROs could affect treatment decisions in cancer patients [105-107]. PROs and their corresponding PROMs may also provide more reliable information regarding the burden of adverse events experienced by patients than observations performed by health care professionals [108,109]. A study which reported results of three randomized trials (i.e., one breast cancer, and two lung cancer trials) showed that treatment-related toxicities (i.e., anorexia, nausea, vomiting, constipation, diarrhea, and hair loss) were underreported by physicians in 40.7% to 74.4% of the patients who reported these toxicities by means of the EORTC QLQ-C30 [109]. Considering that in daily practice toxicities are often not systematically scored according to standardized methods, under-recognition of toxicities in daily practice may be even more distinct. Moreover, in patients receiving palliative chemotherapy in an outpatient setting, PRO-related issues were discussed significantly more often with those patients that completed the EORTC QLQ-C30 before consultation with their doctor and when both patients and physicians had

taken knowledge of the results before the actual consultation [110]. Similar results were reported by Velikova et al. [111].

Given the need for improved patient participation in treatment decision making and that PROs could facilitate this process, this thesis aims to stimulate the use of PROs in treatment decision making. Results of a study are reported that assesses patients' level of participation and factors (e.g., level of patients' decisional conflict, feeling uninformed) related to patients' opinions about their participation. Moreover, PROs will be related to clinical outcomes of treatments (e.g., side effects) and patient's opinions about their treatment. Our results could provide opportunities to improve patient participation in shared treatment decision making.

AIMS OF THIS THESIS

The aims of this thesis were: 1) to improve the knowledge of physicians, researchers, and other health care professionals about the concepts, definitions, and application of some of the most frequently used patient reported outcomes (PROs) in lung cancer, 2) to stimulate the use of QoL measurement in lung cancer by testing the psychometric properties of the World Health Organization Quality of Life-BREF instrument (WHOQOL-BREF), 3) to identify clinical and sociodemographic variables that are related to HRQoL and QoL in lung cancer, 4) to investigate the association between patients' feelings about treatment and HRQoL and QoL in lung cancer, and 5) to explore the process of treatment decision making in patients with lung cancer.

The following research questions are addressed:

- Chapter 1: Is the DT a predictor for overall survival after correction for variables such as age, gender, comorbidity, and histology in patients with lung cancer?
- Chapter 2: Is the WHOQOL-BREF a reliable and valid patient reported outcome measure (PROM) to evaluate QoL in patients with lung cancer and mesothelioma?
- Chapter: 3: Which factors (e.g., depressive symptoms, personality traits, age, gender, performance status, education) are associated with HRQoL and QoL in patients with lung cancer at the start of treatment?
- Chapter 4: Is the CTSQ a reliable and valid PROM to evaluate patients' treatment opinions in patients with lung cancer treated with chemotherapy?
- Chapter 5: Which CTSQ domains (i.e., expectations of therapy, feelings about side effects, and satisfaction with therapy) are associated with HRQoL and QoL in patients with lung cancer?
- Chapter 6: What is the added value of patients' satisfaction with therapy alongside outcomes as HRQoL, QoL, adverse events in patients with lung cancer?
- Chapter 7: What is the role of the patient in clinical decision making in lung cancer?

OUTLINE OF THIS THESIS

First, background information is provided regarding the research questions that are explored in the chapters of this thesis (**introduction**). The concepts of distress, HS, HRQoL, QoL, distress, and patients' treatment opinions are discussed. As the DT is often completed by patients with lung cancer, and may have some common grounds with HRQoL, **chapter 1** explores if the DT is associated with survival similarly as HRQoL is. **Chapter 2** reports about the psychometric properties of the WHOQOL-BREF. In addition, minimal clinically important differences were provided to stimulate the use of the WHOQOL-BREF in clinical practice. As HRQoL and QoL are often affected in patients, knowledge about which factors are related to these concepts might provide opportunities to enhance them. In **chapter 3**, potential factors that may be associated with HRQoL and QoL are explored among known factors in multivariable analyses. **Chapter 4** addresses the validation of a PROM that evaluates patients' feelings about treatment, while **chapter 5** assesses which of these feelings are related with HRQoL and QoL. Relating patients' perspectives about treatment with HRQoL and QoL may be of importance for shared treatment decision making and to improve patients' HRQoL and QoL. The role of patients' perspectives about treatment is further explored in **chapter 6** in which the additional value of patients' satisfaction with therapy is determined next to QoL, HRQoL, and adverse events. **Chapter 7** reports how patients value their role in treatment decision making in lung cancer and relates this to the experience of decisional conflict and information provision. This thesis concludes with a **general discussion**, in which the clinical implications of the results of the studies that form this thesis and future perspectives are discussed.

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