APPENDIX

Design

Given the large number of attributes, in combination with the three possible levels for each, literally hundreds of millions of different choice questions could be presented. We used specialised software (Ngene) to select the most informative combinations of attribute levels per choice question, resulting in D-efficient designs. This happened separately for each question type: all domains folded-in, symptoms domain folded-out, limitations domain folded-out, and mental problems domain folded out.

For each type, four to six blocks of questions were developed. Finally, questionnaires were assembled by combining one block of five questions with all domains folded-in with a block of eight questions from a type with a domain folded-out. To optimize the efficiency of the design, this design process was repeated after half of the patients had answered the questionnaire; it was repeated three times for the members from the general public. This is best practice in DCE research and ensured that the newer designs were increasingly more efficient.

Regression model

Given the fold-in-fold-out-presentation of the discrete choice questions, an extra addition to conventional regression methods was required. It is plausible that the task of answering became more difficult when domains were folded-out, because the complexity increased. This might lead to less clear preferences – and smaller coefficients - in folded-out questions as a whole. At the same time, specific attributes could get more attention when domains were folded-out than when they were folded-in, which might lead to stronger preferences for these specific attributes relative to the other attributes within a choice set.

For this reason, a regression model were developed that explicitly took into account the fact that the structure of questions was not constant, i.e. in some choice questions all domains were folded-in, whereas in other choice questions one of the domains was folded-out.

The regression model included parameters to correct for folding-in domains. One parameter (1+phi) adjusted the full regression equation multiplicatively for increased complexity in folded-out

questions. Three domain-specific parameters (1+labda) corrected multiplicatively for stronger preferences for the symptoms, limitations and mental problems domains when either of these was folded out, respectively.

The regression coefficients in table 2 were adjusted to the folded-out state. This was done by multiplying each of the coefficients in the symptoms, limitations and mental problems domains with their respective (1+0.5*labda). The correction was applied partially since the effect of folding-in and out could be mixed. On the one hand, attributes did not get enough attention, relatively, when they were folded-out. On the other hand, the attention of respondents may be exaggeratedly drawn to the folded-out domain after the first five choice sets in the questionnaire, which were all folded-out completely. This would reduce the first effect, and for that reason the correction was not applied in full.