

Utility

Utility, or usefulness, is the (perceived) ability of something to satisfy needs or wants. In health economics, utilities measure the strength of patient preferences. For example, how important various factors are to patients, such as symptoms, pain, and psychological health. The impact of new treatments on those factors, and therefore on quality of life (QoL), can then be calculated. This is a common approach used by health technology assessment (HTA) bodies, which advise on whether treatments should be funded by (for example) government health departments.