

Honoring the Life of Dennis Revicki (1951-2021)

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Our friend and colleague, Dennis Albert Revicki, PhD, passed away suddenly at the age of 69, on May 9, 2021. Dennis made enormous contributions to the field of outcomes research during his long and productive career. He contributed to the growth and success of ISOQOL in a wide variety of ways, including serving as a member of the ISOQOL board and as its treasurer. Furthermore, he served first as an Associate Editor and then two terms as Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Quality of Life Research*. He was also a founding Co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Patient-Reported Outcomes*. Dennis co-chaired the 5th Annual Meeting held in Baltimore in 1998 and a large, mid-year meeting in Boston in 2004. This led to a book of invited papers that he co-edited.¹ Dennis also co-authored several articles on behalf of ISOQOL on standards for assessing health-related quality of life² and the use of patient-reported outcomes (PROs) within comparative effectiveness research.³ In recognition of these many contributions and his impact on the field, Dennis received the 2007 ISOQOL President's Award, its highest honor.

The above articles published on behalf of ISOQOL represent only a small portion of Dennis' body of highly influential published work, including 422 articles indexed in Medline (as of this writing), 37 book chapters and articles in volumes edited by himself or others, and edited volumes on item response theory (IRT)⁴ and health outcomes methods.¹ Across all these efforts, Dennis demonstrated a uniquely broad range of expertise. His knowledge spanned multiple therapy areas including psychotherapeutics and neuroscience, oncology, gastrointestinal conditions, female sexual dysfunction, HIV/AIDS, and rare diseases; methodology including modern psychometric theory, instrument development and validation, and health state utility

assessment for economic applications; and the use of PROs in the regulatory context. He made substantive contributions in each of these areas. Two decades ago, he helped to shape the field of PRO assessment when he co-authored several seminal articles on health outcomes and development of measures for use in the regulatory context.^{5,6} He contributed to the development and validation of countless PRO and preference-based measures that will be used to assess treatment outcomes for years to come (165 references are identified when his name is combined with “Validity” in a Medline search).

Dennis was an early leader in the effort to apply IRT to the measurement of health-related quality of life. In 1997, he published a paper in a special issue of *Quality of Life Research* advocating for the IRT approach seven years before the PROMIS effort was initiated.⁷ When PROMIS began in 2004, he co-led the pain domain assessment group that produced PROMIS assessments that are now widely used, and he served as the PROMIS Health Organization President from its founding in 2008 until 2013. Dennis was also a leader in the field of health state utility assessment, quantifying quality of life using preference-based approaches so that it could be incorporated into cost-effectiveness modeling of medical products. Recently, Dennis had been involved in projects combining his interests in IRT and utilities, deriving methods for estimating utilities based on two IRT-based item banks, the PROMIS system and the NeuroQoL.^{8,9} Post-retirement, he continued to consult in the field of outcomes research and make contributions to a wide range of projects.

Twenty-six years ago, Dennis left his position at Battelle along with Bryan Luce, Nancy Kline Leidy, and several others to start a health economic and outcomes research company. This small group of leaders was a fortuitous combination. The group they founded, Medtap, ultimately evolved into UBC and Evidera, which remains a leading organization in the field of

health economics and outcomes research. Medtap, UBC, and Evidera have always been widely respected for the quality of their work and their leadership in health outcomes research, and Dennis played an integral role in shaping and maintaining that reputation. Dennis recently retired from Evidera, where he was Senior Vice President in the Patient-Centered Research Group. With his generous spirit, sense of humor, and humble authority on matters of his considerable expertise, Dennis helped to create a vibrant company culture as well as enduring and trusted relationships with clients and regulators.

Among his Evidera colleagues, Dennis is remembered most for his vivacious humor and kindness. Despite his boundless productivity, he was unfailingly generous with his time, always lending his support and expertise without hesitation. He never missed a deadline, he always had something useful to say, and yet he also never appeared stressed or flustered. He helped to connect people and fostered many lasting relationships between people who would not have met otherwise. Dennis truly shined as a mentor to several generations of younger outcomes researchers, including many who have grown into leaders in the field. He approached the work with a joy and enthusiasm that was inspiring. Most importantly, Dennis was a good friend – warm, reliable, and always supportive. He was also a traveler with an adventurous spirit and a love for music, the ocean, his dogs (affectionately called his “research assistants” when they occasionally barked during teleconferences), and his exotic tropical fruit trees (which may have been the best source of rare and delicious sugar apples in the United States). Everyone who knows Dennis knows that there was no better dinner companion.

He was born August 30, 1951 in New Britain, Connecticut to the late Albert Paul and Dolores (Gade) Revicki. Dennis is survived by his wife, Mary Lou Poe, as well as siblings, Debbie Horan and her husband Ed of Connecticut; Gary Revicki of Connecticut; Gail Goldberg

and her husband Gene of New Mexico; Peter Revicki and his wife Carol of Connecticut; Ken Revicki and his wife Patty of Connecticut; many loving nieces and nephews, and his two dogs. Dennis and Mary Lou lived in Sarasota, Florida where they enjoyed sunshine, friends, good food and wine, kayaking, and their house and garden.

Contributions may be made in his memory to World Wildlife Fund at www.worldwildlife.org; Wilderness Society at www.wilderness.org; Marie Selby Botanical Gardens at www.Selby.org; or Mote Marine Lab & Aquarium at www.mote.org.

Selected Citations

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5. Leidy NK, Revicki DA, Geneste B. Recommendations for evaluating the validity of quality of life claims for labeling and promotion. *Value Health*. Mar-Apr 1999;2(2):113-127.
6. Revicki DA, Osoba D, Fairclough D, et al. Recommendations on health-related quality of life research to support labeling and promotional claims in the United States. *Qual Life Res*. 2000;9(8):887-900.
7. Revicki DA, Cella DF. Health status assessment for the twenty-first century: item response theory, item banking and computer adaptive testing. *Qual Life Res*. Aug 1997;6(6):595-600.

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9. Matza LS, Phillips G, Dewitt B, et al. A Scoring Algorithm for Deriving Utility Values from the Neuro-QoL for Patients with Multiple Sclerosis. *Med Decis Making*. Oct 2020;40(7):897-911.