

Does freedom make a difference?

Subjective well-being and perceived capabilities amongst cancer patients in France.

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This version: September 25, 2017

Abstract

Subjective well-being and perceived capabilities – an operationalization of Sen's concept of capability – have been recently proposed as alternative indicators for individual well-being to inform resources allocation in health care. Both types of measures rely on self-reported information and little is known as to how they compare together empirically. The aim of this paper is to investigate the differences between global and health-focused measures of subjective well-being and of perceived capabilities with a focus on their relationships with dimensions of health-related quality of life. Based on panel data concerning a sample of cancer patients, our analyses suggest that measures of subjective well-being and of perceived capabilities capture quite different pictures of individual welfare. Yet, they also raise concerns as to what is really captured by self-reported measures of capabilities, especially when they relate to a specific dimension of life such as health.