

Health and good life

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My approach 1.

- Personal
- Empirical
- Philosophical

Philosophy as *thinking about thinking*

Medicine: Is X healthy?

Philosophy: What is "healthy"?

My approach 2.

- Unless it is about issues that are real to you, or could become so; about problems you actually have, or could have; about ways of thinking that really are yours, or are real options for you; then philosophy is existentially empty”

Magee 2000

Case 1.

- A 5-year-old boy is coming to a paediatric outpatient clinic
- His previous diagnoses include
 - Premature birth (28 weeks)
 - Respiratory distress syndrome
 - Cerebral palsy

Case 6.

- Professor of mathematics
- Living will:
 - No active medical treatment in case he has lost his ability to enjoy intellectual challenges
- Brain damage in car accident
 - Ends up at nursing home
 - Enjoying comics

Terminology

- Good life
- Happiness
- Well-being
- Quality of life
 - Subjective
 - Objective
- Health
- Disease
- Illness
- Disability

Time perspective

- Am I healthy / What is my quality of life
 - Right now?
 - These days?
 - These times...?
 - What has it been ...?
 - Recently?
 - Most of my life?
 - Merciful memory
 - What am I expecting ...?

What is health?

- WHO:
 - "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."
 - *Not* a definition for scientific purposes; i.e. to be operationalised
 - Instead, a *programme* declaration
 - Utopian? Yes, but what's wrong with utopies...

Thanks: Ossi Rahkonen

What is health?

- Nordenfelt:
 - "A is healthy if, and only if, A is able, given standard circumstances in his environment, to fulfil those goals which are necessary and jointly sufficient for his minimal happiness"

What is health?

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Subjective and objective health 1.

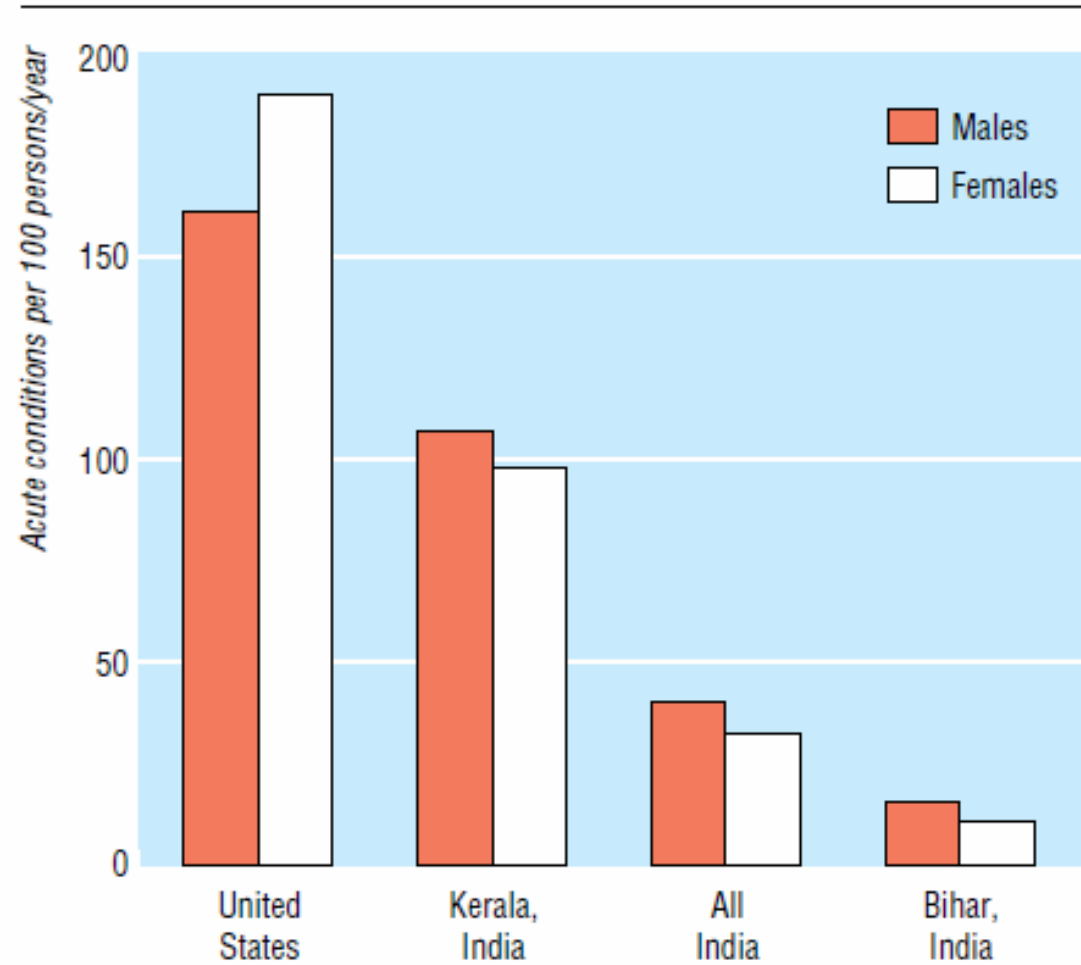


Fig 2 Incidence of reported morbidity in India, mid-1970s, compared with United States, mid-1980s^{6 9}

Subjective and objective health 2.

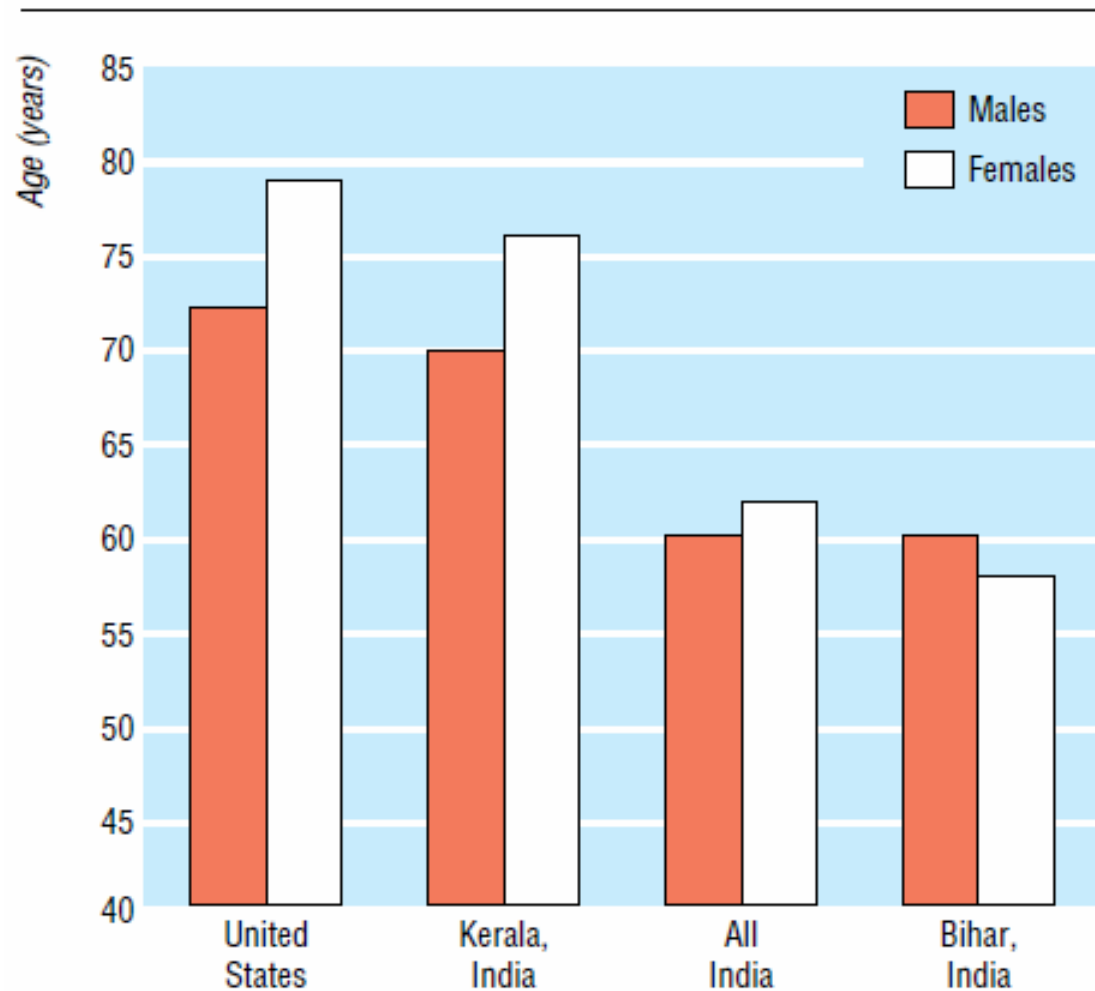


Fig 1 Life expectancy among males and females in India compared with United States, mid-1990s^{7 8}

Subjective and objective health 3.

- The priority of the subjective view
 - For example pain
- However, medical experts may have a different view
 - For example, blood pressure
- The patient's view may be seriously limited by her social experience

Quality of life

- Basic needs approach
 - Combine both subjective and objective dimensions
 - Having
 - Loving
 - Being

Having

- material conditions necessary for survival and for avoiding misery
- nutrition, air, water, protection against diseases, and the like.
- measured by indicators denoting economic resources, housing and working conditions, health and education.

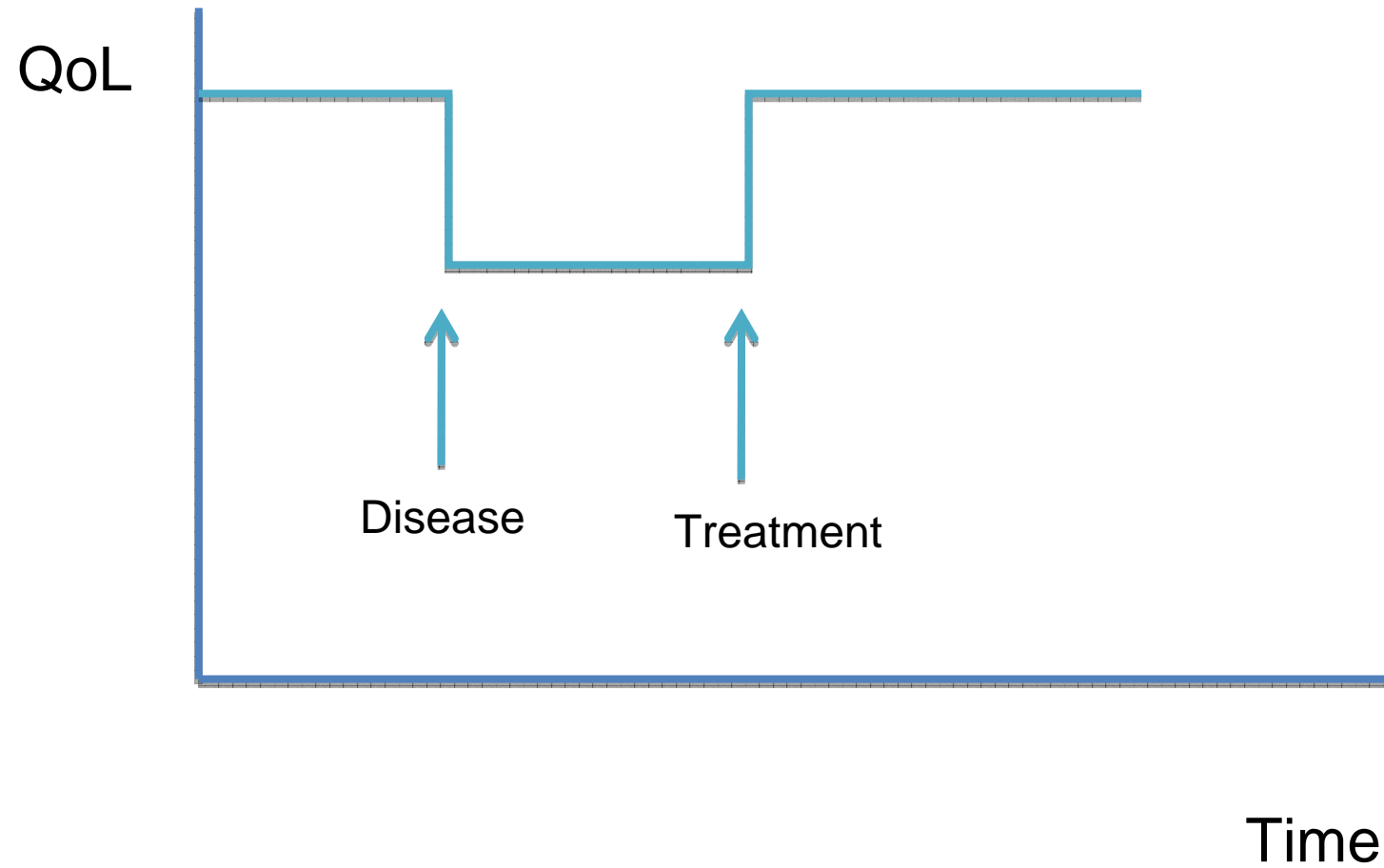
Loving

- ... the need to relate to other people and to form social identities.
- The level of need satisfaction in this area is assessed by measures denoting attachments to family and the local community, relationships with workmates, active patterns of friendship and the like.

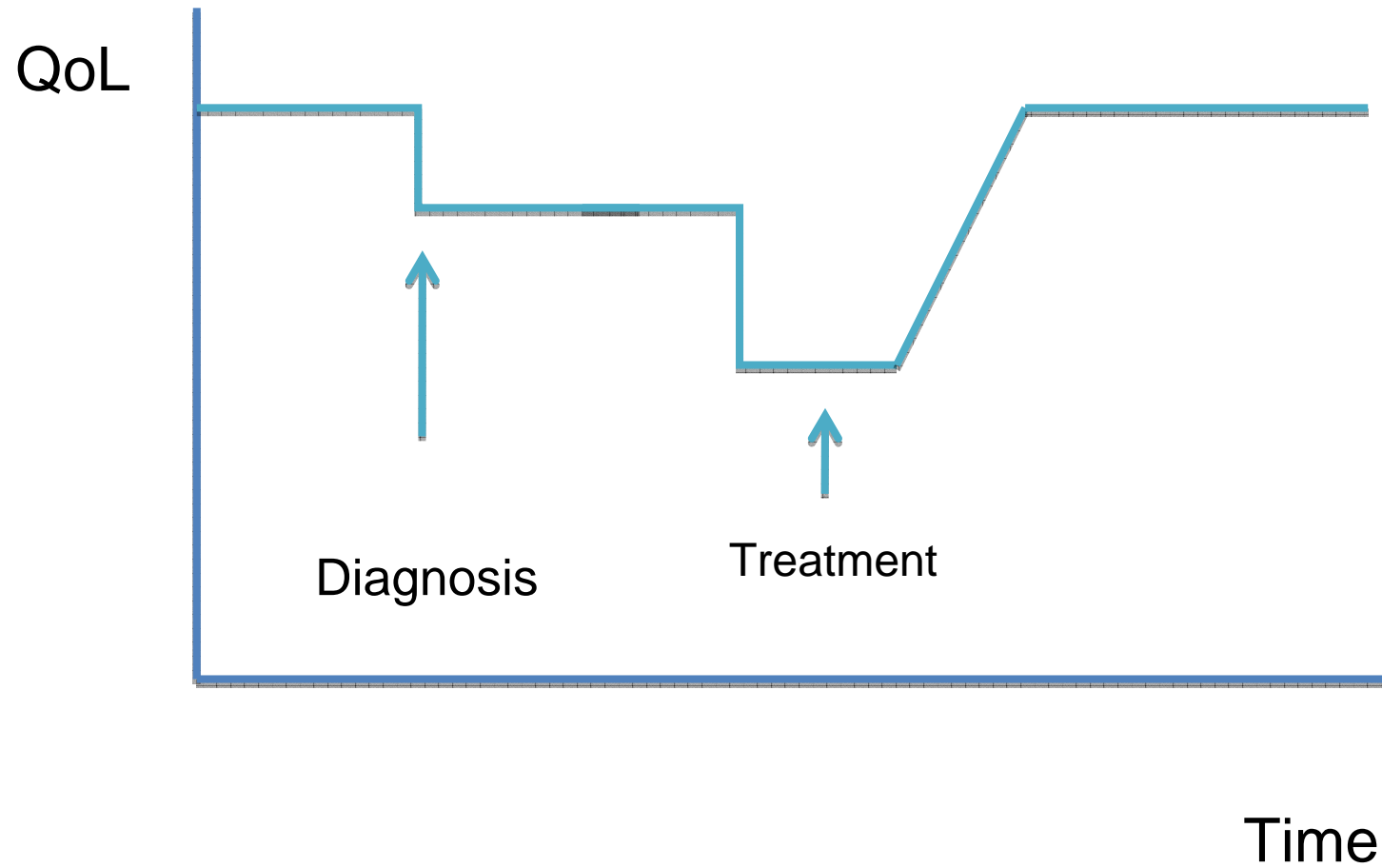
Being

- ... the need to integrate into society and to live in harmony with nature.
- Personal growth and alienation represent the positive and negative aspects of Being, respectively.
- Empirical indicators measure, for example, the extent a person can participate in decisions and activities influencing his or her life, opportunities for leisure-time activities, meaningful work and so forth.

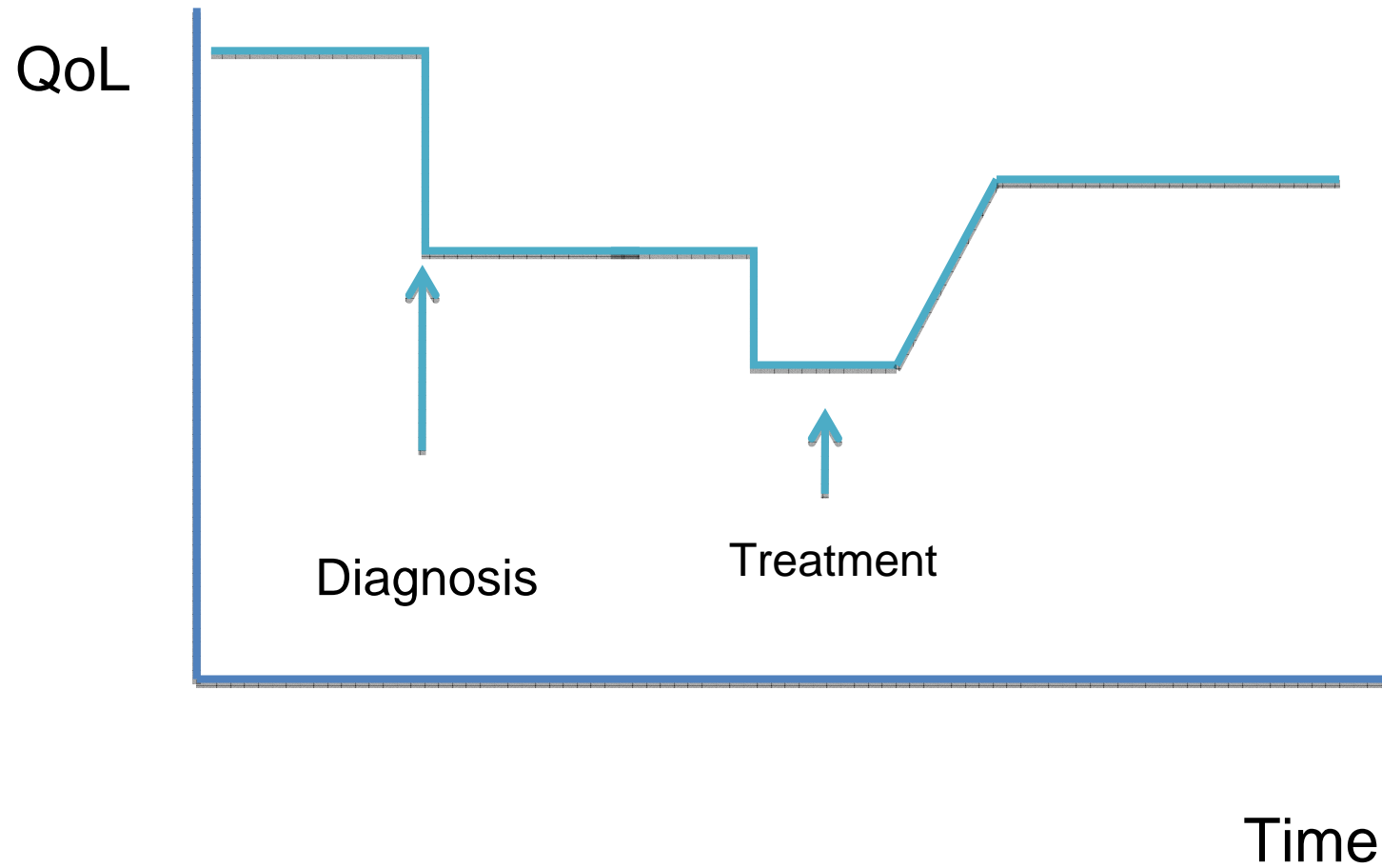
Health and quality of life 1.



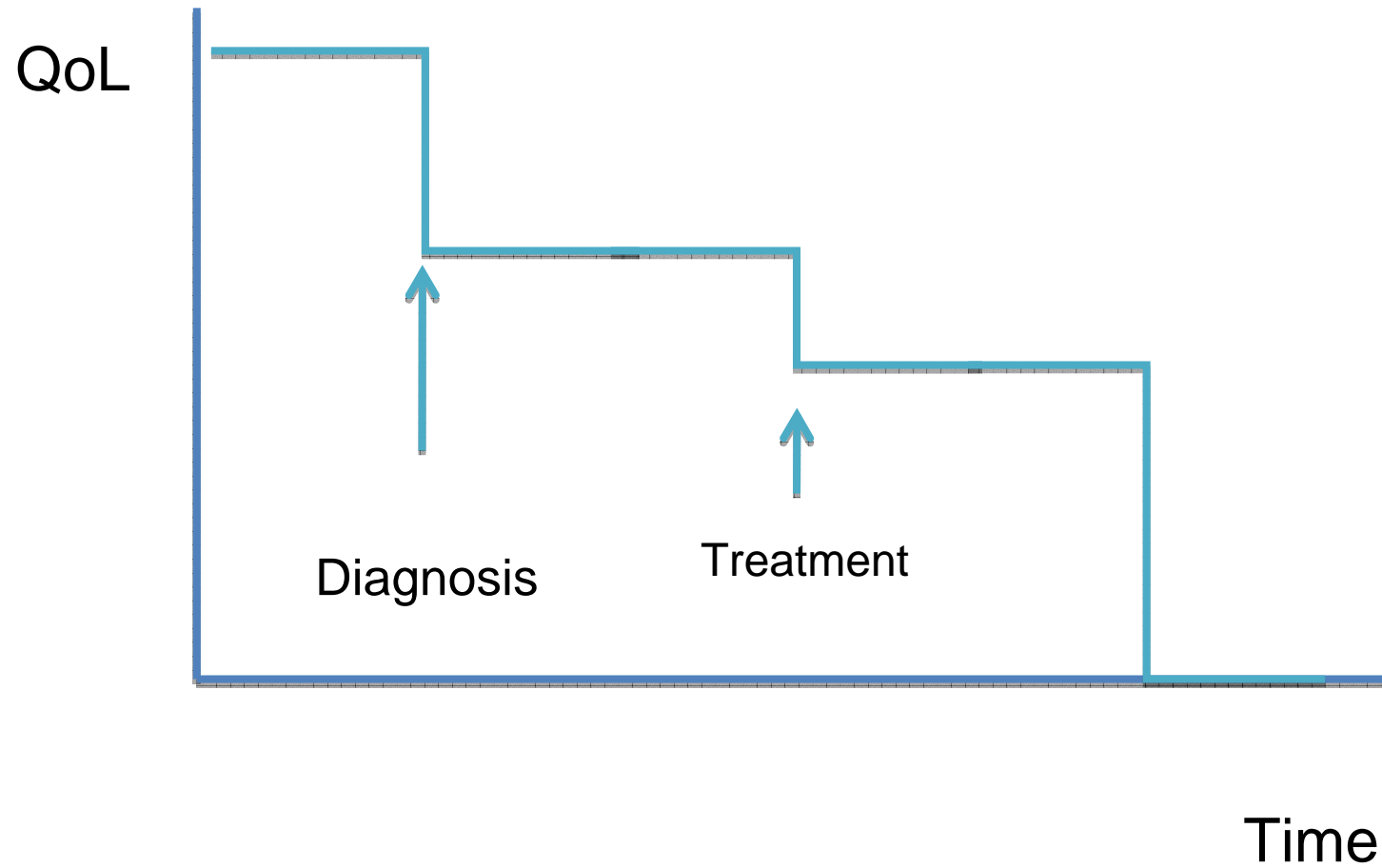
Health and quality of life 2.



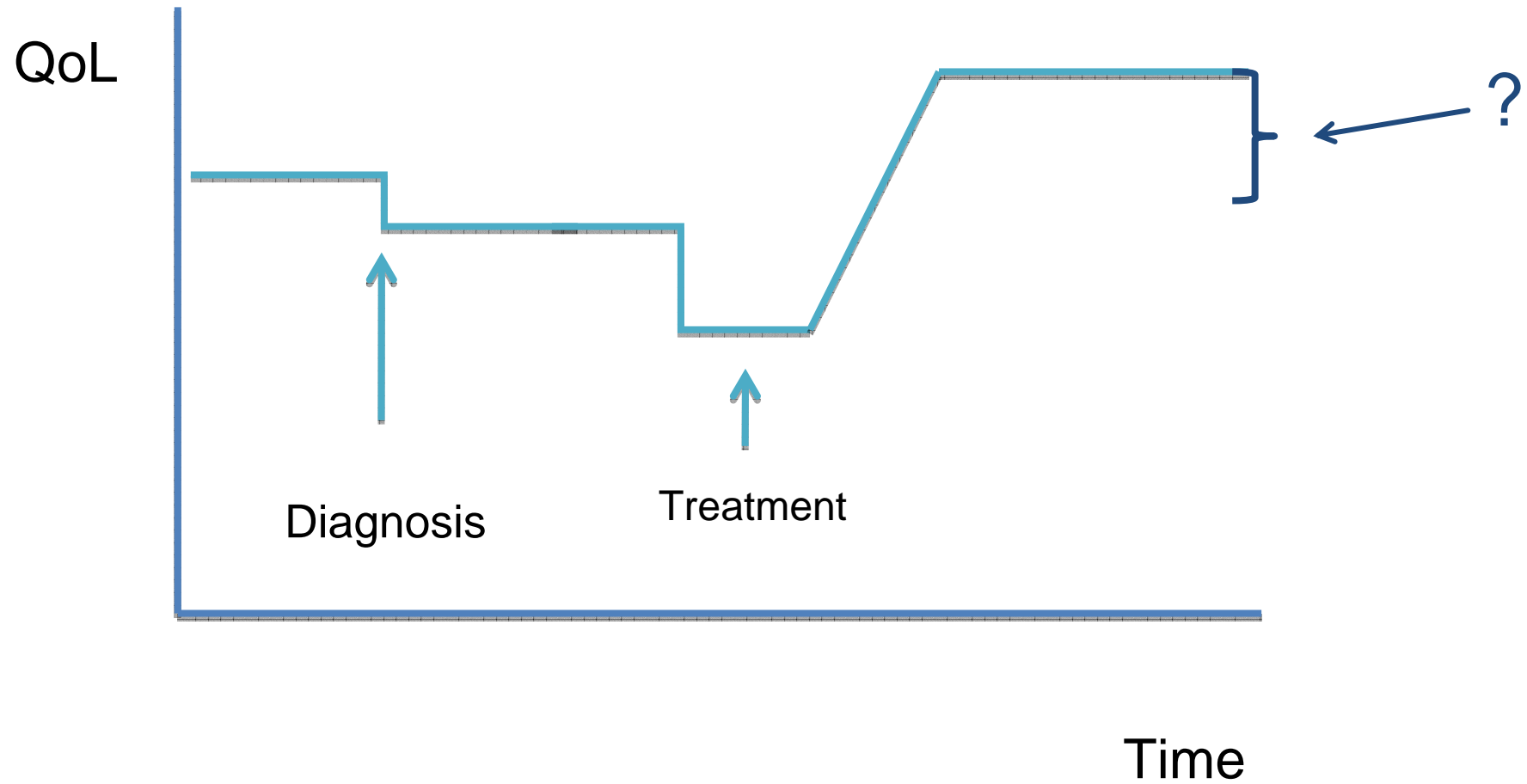
Health and quality of life 3.



Health and quality of life 4.



Health and quality of life 5.



Forskning

Överlevare är lyckligare

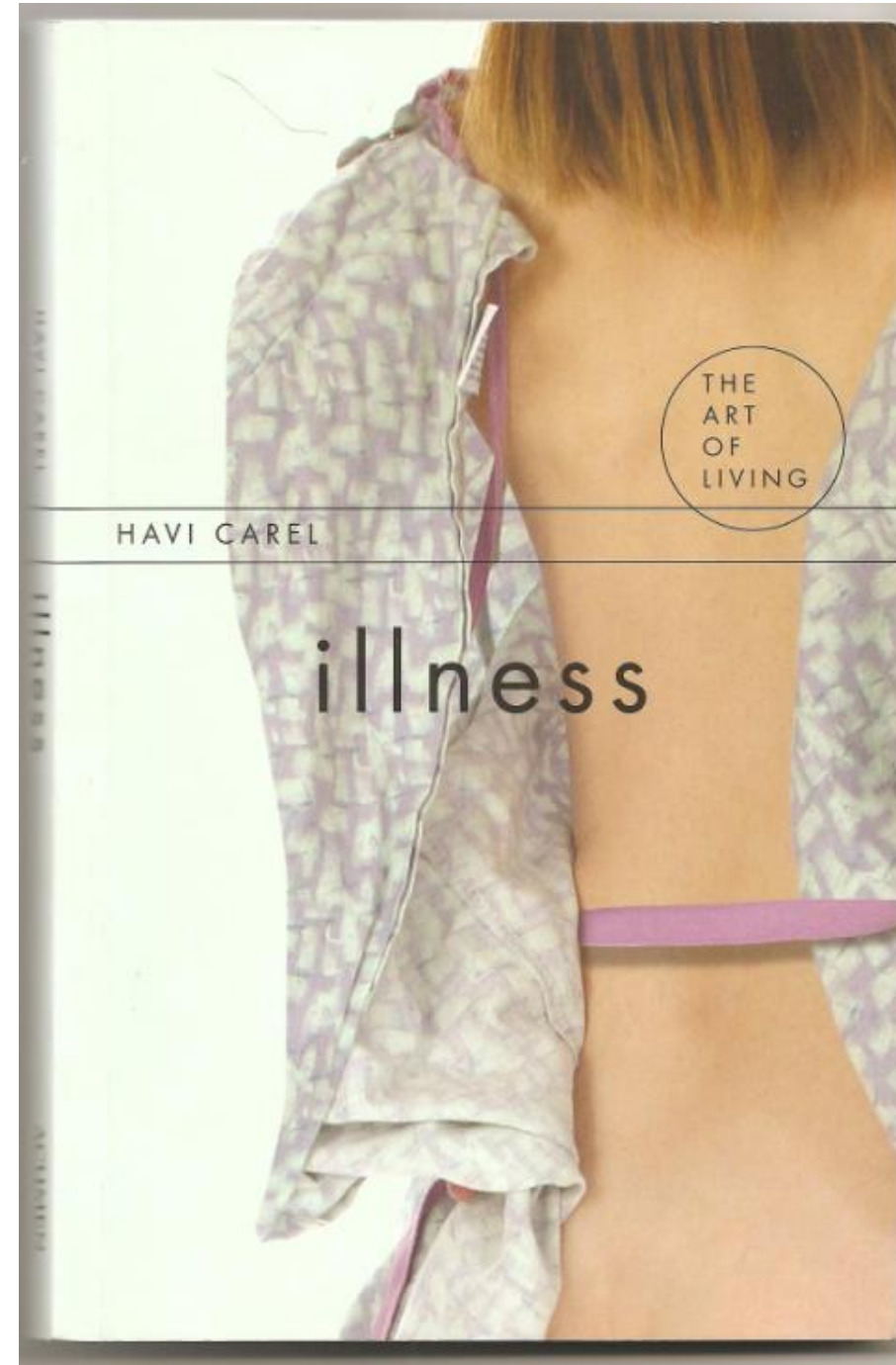
En ny svensk studie visar att ungdomar som överlevt en cancersjukdom är mindre nedstämda och har högre livskvalitet än jämnåriga, friska kamrater.

... de flesta ungdomar som in-

Life after cancer

- Larsson et al. Eur J Cancer 2010;46:1062-68
- "On a group level, persons diagnosed with cancer during adolescence show an increase in quality of life and a decrease with regard to anxiety and depression over time"

Health
within
illness



Health within illness

- "I suggest that health and illness are not dichotomous or separate kingdoms. Moreover, in the same way that episodes of illness can occur within health, an experience of health within illness is a possible, if often overlooked, phenomenon"

Health within illness

- "I was surprised at this, as this ability to be ill and happy, to be gravely ill and yet feel so normal, was not something I expected."
- "I have no control over this illness but I have full control over my emotions and my inner state"
- "I learned to live in the here and now"