BACKGROUND: While previous studies have defined ranges for health related quality of life (HRQOL) in other populations, there has been little attention to pregnant women. This study was undertaken to describe the evolution of the health related quality of life (HRQOL) and life satisfaction during pregnancy and puerperium.

METHODS:
Sample: 588 pregnant women were evaluated between the 8th and 12th week (n=133), 18th and 22nd week (n=155), 27th and 45th week (n=206) and two weeks after the childbirth (n=96). The mean age was 29.46 years old (SD=4.86), 269 (46.1%) were multiparous and 319 (53.9%) multiparous, 523 (88%) were married, 101 (17.2%) had university studies and 147 (25.4%) had a low level of studies.

Instruments: a) Spanish version of Dartmouth COOP Functional Assessment Charts/WONCA (COOP/WONCA) calculating the means for total score (eliminated the item “change in the state of health”) and for each one of the 8 items: social activities, daily activities, feeling, pain, state of health, physical fitness, social support and quality of life. b) Spanish version of Life Satisfaction Scale (Diener, 1985).
Design: Cross-sectional. To detect changes, ANOVA with Scheffe test were calculated.

RESULTS:
The total score of COOP/WONCA show one progressive worsening in the HRQOL over the course of pregnancy and puerperium (figure 1). The major change is produced between the second and third trimester. For the single items, the majority shows a tendency to the worsening: social activities, daily activities, feeling, pain, state of health, physical fitness and social support (figure 2). This worsening is major between the second and third trimester, except for the variable “social activities” that show the worst scores in the puerperium, and “social support”, that change the first to the second trimester and, from there, it remains stable. The pain is that which show the most changes. The quality of life and feeling shows a stable pattern (figure 3). The life satisfaction shows, also, a stable pattern during pregnancy and puerperium (figure 4).

CONCLUSIONS:
The health related quality of life, during pregnancy and puerperium, show a soft tendency, but progressive, toward a worst quality of life, especially starting from the second trimester. After childbirth they worsen, especially, the social activities. Life satisfaction is stable.

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