The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) is a multipurpose instrument used for diagnosis, screening, monitoring and measuring the severity of depression. The PHQ-9 is a self-report tool and incorporates the DSM-IV depression diagnostics criteria along with other leading major depressive symptoms. The PHQ-9 uses the frequency of the symptoms which factor into the scoring severity index.

The PHQ-9 also has a clinical utility factor. Since it is a brief tool it is widely used in clinical practice. In a clinical setting, the questionnaire is quickly completed by the patient and then briefly scored by a clinician. The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) can also be administered repeatedly, which helps clinicians in tracking improvement or regression of the depressive state of the patient. The PHQ-9 scores of 5, 10, 15, and 20 represent mild, moderate, moderately severe, and severe depression respectively.

Authors

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To Access this Instrument

Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)

Reliability and Validity

The diagnostic validity of the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) was established in studies that involved 8 primary care and 7 obstetrical clinics across the United States. The PHQ-9 scores less than or equal to 10 had a sensitivity of 88% and a specificity of 88% for major depression.

In a study looking at the validity of the PHQ-9 in the general population done in 2005 the Patient Health Questionnaire proved to be reliable and valid in not only recognizing major depression but also sub-threshold depressive disorders in the general population.

Administration, Analysis and Reporting

Statistics Solutions consists of a team of professional methodologists and statisticians that can assist the student or professional researcher in administering the survey instrument, collecting the data, conducting the analyses and explaining the results.
For additional information on these services, click here.

**Dissertations that have used the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale**

Cheon, Keejeong. 2 May 2012. *Psychological Well-Being of Mothers with Preterm Infants.* (University of Central Las Angeles).

Alschuler, Kevin. 2006. *College Integrated Care: Effectiveness of the Use of Modified Version of the Patient Health Questionnaire for Patients in a University Health Clinic.* (Eastern Michigan University).


**References**
