

Geriatric Depression Scale

- Population:** Elderly patients
- Description:** A 30 question survey designed to rate depression in elderly patients. The survey is easy to administer and is used primarily as a screening instrument in evaluating an elderly patient.
- Mode of Administration:** The survey may be administered in two formats, either self-administered or administered by a physician to a patient.
- Completion:**
- Time to Complete:** Approximately 5 minutes
 - Time to Score:** Approximately 5 minutes
 - Scoring:** Of the 30 survey questions included on the GDS, 10 indicate depression when answered with a negative response and the other 20 indicate depression with a positive response. Questions 1, 5, 7, 9, 15, 19, 21, 27, 29 and 30 indicate depression with a negative answer. Questions that indicate depression, either with a positive or negative response, are allocated one point. The points are then added together to form a total score for the GDS.
- Interpretation:** The cutoff for the scale is as follows:
- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| normal: | 0 to 9 points |
| mild depressive: | 10 to 19 points |
| severe depressive: | 20-30 points |
- Reliability:** 100 patients were divided into two groups in order to test the GDS in relation to the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale and the Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression. In terms of the correlation with the total score it was found that all three measures represent internally consistent tools (GDS correlation: 0.56 range 0.32-0.83).

A calculation of Chronbach's alpha confirms the internal consistency of the GDS. The calculated alpha value was 0.94 indicating a high level of internal consistency.

Internal consistency was also tested for using the split half technique. Here the results again indicated internal consistency for the GDS. A reliability coefficient of 0.94 was calculated for the GDS.

Test retest reliability was computed by having 20 patients retake the survey one week later, resulting in a correlation of 0.85.

Validity:

The GDS has a strong level of content validity. Content validity is established by the manner in which the individual survey questions were selected. The final questions for the GDS were selected out of 100 questions and they represented the ones with the highest correlation between the total score and depression.

The primary test for validity was done by comparing the patients scores on the GDS with the classification of the patients on the basis of Research Diagnostic Criteria for affective disorders. The GDS proved to be a valid indicator of depression for the elderly on this measure.

Reference:

Yesavage JA, Brink TL, Rose TL, Lum O, Huang V, Adey M, Leirer VO. Development and Validation of a Geriatric Depression Screening Scale: A Preliminary Report. *Journal of Psychiatric Research* 1983; 17(1):37-49.

GERIATRIC DEPRESSION SCALE

Instructions: Choose the best answer for how you felt over the past week.

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Are you basically satisfied with your life?..... | yes/no |
| 2. Have you dropped many of your activities and interests? | yes/no |
| 3. Do you feel that your life is empty? | yes/no |
| 4. Do you often get bored? | yes/no |
| 5. Are you hopeful about the future?..... | yes/no |
| 6. Are you bothered by thoughts you can't get out of your head? | yes/no |
| 7. Are you in good spirits most of the time? | yes/no |
| 8. Are you afraid that something bad is going to happen to you? | yes/no |
| 9. Do you feel happy most of the time? | yes/no |
| 10. Do you often feel helpless?..... | yes/no |
| 11. Do you often get restless and fidgety? | yes/no |
| 12. Do you prefer to stay at home, rather than going out and doing new things? | yes/no |
| 13. Do you frequently worry about the future? | yes/no |
| 14. Do you feel you have more problems with memory than most? | yes/no |
| 15. Do you think it is wonderful to be alive now?..... | yes/no |
| 16. Do you often feel downhearted and blue? | yes/no |
| 17. Do you feel pretty worthless the way you are now? | yes/no |
| 18. Do you worry a lot about the past? | yes/no |
| 19. Do you find life very exciting? | yes/no |
| 20. Is it hard for you to get started on new projects?..... | yes/no |
| 21. Do you feel full of energy? | yes/no |
| 22. Do you feel that your situation is hopeless? | yes/no |
| 23. Do you think that most people are better off than you are? | yes/no |
| 24. Do you frequently get upset over little things? | yes/no |
| 25. Do you frequently feel like crying?..... | yes/no |
| 26. Do you have trouble concentrating? | yes/no |
| 27. Do you enjoy getting up in the morning? | yes/no |
| 28. Do you prefer to avoid social gatherings? | yes/no |
| 29. Is it easy for you to make decisions? | yes/no |
| 30. Is your mind as clear as it used to be? | yes/no |

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