

Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)

Depression Severity

This easy to use patient questionnaire is a self-administered version of the PRIME-MD diagnostic instrument for common mental disorders.[1] The PHQ-9 is the depression module, which scores each of the nine DSM-IV criteria as "0" (not at all) to "3" (nearly every day). It has been validated for use in primary care.[2]

It is not a screening tool for depression but it is used to monitor the severity of depression and response to treatment. However, it can be used to make a tentative diagnosis of depression in at-risk populations - eg, those with coronary heart disease or after stroke.[3, 4]

When screening for depression the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2) can be used first (it has a 97% sensitivity and a 67% specificity).[5] If this is positive, the PHQ-9 can then be used, which has 61% sensitivity and 94% specificity in adults.

- (3) It happens often and always to me (>%80),
- (2) It happens sometimes (between %50 - %80),
- (1) It happens a little bit (<%50),
- (0) It does not happen at all.

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

No	Statement	0	1	2	3
1	Little interest or pleasure in doing things?	0	1	2	3
2	Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless?	0	1	2	3
3	Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much?	0	1	2	3
4	Feeling tired or having little energy?	0	1	2	3
5	Poor appetite or overeating?	0	1	2	3
6	Feeling bad about yourself - or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down?	0	1	2	3
7	Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television?	0	1	2	3
8	Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or the opposite - being so worried or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual?	0	1	2	3
9	Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way?	0	1	2	3
Total = [] out of 27 scores					

Evaluation for Depression Severity :

Normal
Scores from 0-4



Mild Depression
Scores from 5-9



Moderate Depression
Scores from 10-14



High Depression
Scores from 15-19



Severe Depression
Scores from 20-27



Notes:

Validity has been assessed against an independent structured mental health professional (MHP) interview. PHQ-9 score ≥ 10 had a sensitivity of 88% and a specificity of 88% for major depression.^[1] It can even be used over the telephone.^[6]

References:

- [1] Kroenke K, Spitzer RL, Williams JB(2001).The PHQ-9: validity of a brief depression severity measure. J Gen Intern Med. 16(9):606-13.
- [2] Cameron IM, Crawford JR, Lawton K, et al (2008). Psychometric comparison of PHQ-9 and HADS for measuring depression severity in primary care. Br J Gen Pract. 2008 Jan 58(546):32-6. doi: 10.3399/bjgp08X263794.
- [3] Haddad M, Walters P, Phillips R, et al (2013). Detecting depression in patients with coronary heart disease: a diagnostic evaluation of the PHQ-9 and HADS-D in primary care, findings from the UPBEAT-UK study. PLoS One. 8(10):e78493. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0078493.
- [4] de Man-van Ginkel JM, Gooskens F, Schepers VP, et al (2012). Screening for poststroke depression using the patient health questionnaire. Nurs Res. 2012 Sep-Oct 61(5):333-41.
- [5] Maurer DM (2012). Screening for depression. Am Fam Physician. 85(2):139-44.
- [6] Pinto-Meza A, Serrano-Blanco A, Penarrubia MT, et al (2005). Assessing depression in primary care with the PHQ-9: can it be carried out over the telephone? J Gen Intern Med. (8):738-42.