

Depression HRA v3 Client Review Document

Overview

The Depression HRA is an online application that pre-screens adults between the ages of 18 and 89 for depressive symptoms. The purpose of the application is to identify consumers who should undergo additional screening for depression in a primary care setting.

Main Scientific Basis

The 2-item Patient Health Questionnaire depression module (PHQ-2)¹ is used as the main scientific basis for the Depression HRA. The PHQ-2 is a clinically validated measure used to identify people who should complete the longer PHQ-9.²

Product Description

Consumers are asked two main questions that comprise the PHQ-2 questionnaire:

- Over the past 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by little interest or pleasure in doing things?
- Over the past 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless?

For each question, users can answer in the following ways:

- Not at all (0 points)
- Several days (1 point)
- More than half the days (2 points)
- Nearly every day (3 Points)

Consumers with an overall PHQ-2 score of 2 or higher are urged to see a health care professional for additional depression screening.³ Consumers who do not meet the PHQ-2 threshold of 2 or more, but who report any of the other common symptoms of depression, are asked to talk to a health care professional if symptoms persist, change, or get worse. Consumers who report no current symptoms are advised to keep a journal and talk to a health care professional if any symptoms arise.

Consumers are also asked about common risk factors for depression and the impact of symptoms on daily life. Consumers' self-reported depression risk factors are tallied in a table. Risk factors include

- personal or family history of depression
- repeated negative emotions (guilt, envy, anger, anxiety)
- chronic pain, chronic illness, or prior traumatic brain injury
- current or recent pregnancy
- weight change in the past month or severe obesity
- low or no income
- moderate to high stress levels
- limited emotional support from friends/family
- low self-esteem
- recent major life event

Answers to these additional questions do not impact the recommendation for clinical follow-up. They are included for educational purposes only. It takes roughly 5 minutes to answer all the questions in the HRA.

Primary Results

The primary result from the Depression HRA is the screening recommendation. The results are organized into the following categories:

Depression Assessment Recommended

Individuals in this category scored a total of 2 or more points on the PHQ-2 scale. This indicates further assessment for depression is warranted.

Tell a Doctor About Your Symptoms

Individuals in this category scored a total of 1 point on the PHQ-2 scale, or indicated that any of the following symptoms bothered them on more than half the days over the last two weeks:

- Sleep problems
- Fatigue
- Appetite problems
- Feeling bad about themselves
- Trouble concentrating
- Moving or speaking more slowly than usual
- Being fidgety or more restless than usual

Keep a Symptom Journal

Individuals in this category did not report having any of the PHQ-2 symptoms and did not report any of the other common symptoms of depression. These users may or may not have risk factors for depression.

About the Suicide Question

People with certain types of depression (E.g. major depressive disorder) have a higher rate of suicide attempts and suicidal ideation.⁴ For this reason, before answering any questions, consumers are asked if they have thoughts of self-harm, have been talking to others about wanting to die, or have made a plan to take their life. Consumers who report having these warning signs for suicide are given a list of emergency resources, including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, instead of the HRA questions.

Throughout the HRA, the clinical variability of depression is cited as one reason only a trained health care professional can diagnose the condition.

References

1. Kroenke K, Spitzer RL, Williams JBW. The Patient Health Questionnaire-2: validity of a two-item depression screener. *Med Care* 2003; 41:1284-1292. doi:10.1097/01.MLR.0000093487.78664.3C
2. Kroenke K, Spitzer RL, et al. (1999). Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) [screening instrument]. Retrieved from <http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/images/res/PHQ%20-%20Questions.pdf>
3. Arroll B, Goodyear-Smith F, Crengle S, et al. Validation of PHQ-2 and PHQ-9 to Screen for Major Depression in the Primary Care Population. *The Annals of Family Medicine*. 2010;8(4):348-353. doi:10.1370/afm.1139
4. American Psychiatric Association. Depressive Disorders. Fifth Edition. In: American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition. Arlington, VA, American Psychiatric Association; 2013:164.