Scoring the PHQ-9 Adolescent (age 12 and up)

Scoring the PHQ-9A is simple and involves reviewing the individual questions, not only the total score. It screens for major depressive disorder, suicide risk, dysthymia and general depression symptoms.

Suicide risk on the PHQ-9A:
- A positive answer to question 9 as well as the two additional suicide items must be followed up by a clinical interview.
- Adolescents can screen negative for depression and screen positive for suicide risk.

Major depressive disorder diagnosis on the PHQ-9A:
- Questions 1 and/or 2 are endorsed as either a “2” or “3.”
- Five or more positive symptoms (positive is defined by a “2” or “3” in questions 1 – 8 and by a “1,” “2” or “3” in question 9).
- The functional impairment question (“How difficult…”) needs to be rated at least as “somewhat difficult.”
- The above are correlated to the DSM 5 criteria for MDD.
- A total PHQ-9A score ≥ 10 has a good sensitivity and specificity for MDD. (See below for instructions on how to obtain a total score.)

All types of depression on PHQ-9A:
- All positive answers (positive is defined by a “2” or “3” in questions 1 – 8 and by a “1,” “2” or “3” in question 9) should be followed up by clinical interview.

Dysthymia diagnosis on the PHQ-9A:
- The dysthymia question (“In the past year…”) should be endorsed as “yes.”

To assess severity of depression obtain a total score:
- Add up the numbers endorsed for questions 1 – 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Depression Severity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 4</td>
<td>No or minimal depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>Mild depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>Moderate depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 19</td>
<td>Moderately severe depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 27</td>
<td>Severe depression</td>
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</tbody>
</table>