

Tip Sheet 6 – The Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS)-15

What is the GDS: The Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) (15 point version) is a depression assessment tool specifically designed for older people. This short form of the GDS was developed in 1986 by Sheikh and Yesavage. There are four ‘trigger’ questions that often alert a practitioner to complete the 15-item GDS. They are:

1. Are you basically satisfied with your life? Yes/**NO**
2. Do you feel that your life is empty? **YES**/No
3. Are you afraid that something bad is going to happen to you? **YES**/No
4. Do you feel happy most of the time? Yes/**NO**

The 15 score item should be completed whenever possible.

Benefits of the GDS: The GDS can be filled out by the client or administered by an interviewer. It comprises of 15 questions about how the client has felt over the past week. Questions require yes/no answers.

While this tool is commonly used with people who have dementia, most studies investigating the GDS have excluded participants with dementia. Alternatively, the Cornell Scale for Depression (Alexopoulos, et al., 1988) has been recommended for use with people in residential care (Sansoni et al, 2007), however training is required to use it.

Cut off: Higher scores indicate more depressive symptoms are present. A score of 6 or more suggests the presence of depression which indicates further medical/psychiatric assessment is required. A score of 11 or more usually always

indicates depression and more severe depression.

Things to be aware of



It has been reported that a number of items in the GDS contain Western value judgments of optimism, happiness, stoicism and looking forward (Sansoni et al, 2007). These include:

- Do you prefer to stay at home, rather than going out and doing new things?
- Do you think it is wonderful to be alive now?
- Do you worry a lot about the past?
- Do you think that most people are better off than you are?

These items may not be appropriate at all times for all cultural groups. Also, it is important to note that clients from some cultural groups may not disclose such information.

Translated Tools



Although there are a number of translated (written) versions of the GDS **many have not been verified or validated in Australia**. You may choose to use the English version of this tool with an interpreter or ask an interpreter to follow a translated version of the tool. Translated tools referred to in the literature with evidence of psychometric properties include:

Italian GDS-15: Pedrabissi & Santinello (1991) using a cut off score of ≥ 6 .

Greek GDS-15: Fountoulakis et al. (1999 – see below) using a cut off of 6/7.

Arabic: Chaaya et al. (2008) GDS-15 (cut off 7/8); Wrobel & Farrag, (2004; 2006 – see below) GDS-30 (cut off=11).



Further Resources and References

The following web page contains copies of the tool, information on scoring and unverified translations of the tool:

<http://www.stanford.edu/~yesavage/GDS.html>

The GDS can also be found on the Dementia Collaborative Research Centre website:

<http://www.dementia-assessment.com.au/measures.html>

References

- **Tool reference:** Sheikh, J.I., & Yesavage, J.A. (1986). Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS): Recent evidence and development of a shorter version. *Clinical Gerontologist*, 5, 165-173.
- Alexopoulos, G.S., Abrams, R.C., Young, R.C., et al. (1988) Cornell scale for depression in dementia. *Biological Psychiatry*. 23(3), 271-284.
- Chaaya, M., Sibai, A-M., El Roueiheb, Z., Chemaitelly, H., Chahine, L.M., Al-Amin, H., & Mahfoud, A. (2008). Validation of the Arabic version of the short Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS-15). *International Psychogeriatrics*, 20(3), 571-581.
- Fountoulakis, K., Tsolaki, M., Iacovdies, A., Yesavage, J., O'Hara, R., Kazis, A., & Ierodiakonou, C. (1999). The validation of the short form of the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) in Greece. *Aging: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 11, 367-372. Tool available here: <http://www.stanford.edu/~yesavage/GDS-Greek.html>
- Pedrabissi, L. & Santinello, M. (1991). Contributo all'adattamento italiano e taratura della Geriatric Depression Scale. *B. Psicol. Appl*, 198, 3-7 (in Italian).
- Sansoni, J., Marosszky, N., Jeon, Y.-H., Chenoweth, L., Hawthorne, G., King M, Budge M, Zapart S, Sansoni E, Senior K, Kenny, P., Low, L. (2007). *Final Report: Dementia Outcomes Measurement Suite Project*. Centre for Health Service Development, University of Wollongong.
- Wrobel, N.H. & Farrag, M.F. (2004). *Identification of dementia and mental health symptoms in an elderly Arab American sample: Final report*. Wayne County Senior Citizens Services, Detroit. (Tool attached as an appendix).
- Wrobel, N.H., & Farrag, M.F. (2006). A Preliminary Report on the Validation of the Geriatric Depression Scale in Arabic. *Clinical Gerontologist*, 29(4), 33-46.

GDS in Greek

Fountoulakis, K., Tsolaki, M., Iacovdies, A., Yesavage, J., O'Hara, R., Kazis, A., & Ierodiakonou, C. (1999). The validation of the short form of the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) in Greece. *Aging Clin. Exp. Res*, 11, 367-372.

Web address for tool: <http://www.stanford.edu/~yesavage/GDS-Greek.html>

1	Are you basically satisfied with your life?		
	Είστε βασικά επραξιό η εκ έλνηκε ηε δσ ή ζ αο;	ναι όχι	0 1
2	Have you dropped many of your activities and interests?		
	Εγθαται είς απε πνυ έο από ηη δξαζηεξ ή ηηηηεο θαηηηα ελδηθ έξνληά ζ αο;	ναι όχι	1 0
3	Do you feel that your life is empty?		
	Αίξζ άλεξηε όηηηε δσ ή ζ αο ελκαηάδεηη;	ναι όχι	1 0
4	Do you often get bored?		
	Βαξήξ ηε ζπρλά;	ναι όχι	1 0
5	Are you in good spirits most of the time?		
	Είστε ζηα θέθηη ζ αο ηνλ πεξηξίζ όηεξν θαηξό;	ναι όχι	0 1
6	Are you afraid that something bad is going to happen to you?		
	Φνβάζεηε όηη ζ αο ζπκβεί θαηηηακό;	ναι όχι	1 0
7	Do you feel happy most of the time?		
	Αίξζ άλεξηε επηηηηξίθέ λνο ηνλ πεξηξίζ όηεξν θαηξό;	ναι όχι	0 1
8	Do you often feel helpless?		
	Αίξζ άλεξηε ζπρλά αβνήζε ηηνο;	ναι όχι	1 0
9	Do you prefer to stay at home rather than go out and do new things?		
	Πξνηηράηε λα κέιεηε ζ ηηνλ ζπ ή ηηηαξά λα βγαίλεηε έμσ θαηηηαθάλε δνθώζεηα θαηηηνύξηηη πξάγκαηα;	ναι όχι	1 0
10	Do you feel you have more problems with your memory than most?		

	Αιζς άλεζειε όηιέρεηε πεξιηζς όηεξ α πεξνβιήκα ηα κε ηε κλήκε ζαο απ' όηηηηάι νηη	ναι όχι	1 0
11	Do you think it is wonderful to be alive now?		
	Πιξηεύεηε όηηείλαηηπέξνρν πεξ άγκα πνπ είζειε δσ ληαλόο ηώξα;	ναι όχι	0 1
12	Do you feel pretty worthless the way you are now?		
	Αιζς άλεζειε άρξε ζηηνο έηζη όπσο ο είζειε ηώξα;	ναι όχι	1 0
13	Do you feel full of energy?		
	Αιζς άλεζειε γεκάηηο ελέγειη;	ναι όχι	0 1
14	Do you feel that your situation is hopeless?		
	Αιζς άλεζειε όηηε θα ηάζ ηαζ ή ζα ο είλαηαπειηζηηθή;	ναι όχι	1 0
15	Do you think that most people are better than you are?		
	Πιξηεύεηε όηηηηηεξίηζς όηεξ νηάλλζς σ πηηείλαηε θαιιύηεξε θ αηάζηαζε από εζάο;	ναι όχι	1 0

GDS in Arabic

Wrobel, N.H. & Farrag, M.F. (2004). *Identification of dementia and mental health symptoms in an elderly Arab American sample: Final report*. Wayne County Senior Citizens Services, Detroit.

GDS

من فضلك ضع دائرة حول أفضل إجابة تصب كيف تشعر خلال الأسبوع الماضي.

- 1) هل أنت راض عن حياتك أساساً؟ لا نعم
- 2) هل تخليت عن كثير من أنشطتك واهتماماتك؟ لا نعم
- 3) هل تشعر بأن حياتك اليومية فارغة؟ لا نعم
- 4) هل كثيراً ما تشعر بالملل؟ لا نعم
- 5) هل تشعر بالأمل نحو المستقبل؟ لا نعم
- 6) هل يضايقتك التفكير في أشياء لا تستطيع التخلص منها؟ لا نعم
- 7) هل أنت في روح معنوية طيبة هذه الأيام؟ لا نعم
- 8) هل أنت خائف من أن شيئاً سيئاً سوف يحدث لك؟ لا نعم
- 9) هل تشعر بالسعادة معظم الوقت؟ لا نعم
- 10) هل تشعر بالعجز معظم الوقت؟ لا نعم
- 11) هل كثيراً ما تشعر بأنك متململ و غير مرتاح؟ لا نعم
- 12) هل تفضل البقاء في البيت على الخروج وعمل أشياء جديدة؟ لا نعم
- 13) هل كثيراً ما تقلق حول المستقبل؟ لا نعم
- 14) هل تشعر بأن لديك مشكلات في الذاكرة أكثر من معظم الناس؟ لا نعم
- 15) هل تعتقد أن شيء رائع أن تكون حياً الآن؟ لا نعم
- 16) هل كثيراً ما تشعر بالانقباض والحزن؟ لا نعم
- 17) هل كثيراً ما تشعر بأنه لا قيمة لك حالياً؟ لا نعم
- 18) هل تقلق كثيراً حول الماضي؟ لا نعم
- 19) هل تجد الحياة مثيرة جداً؟ لا نعم
- 20) هل من الصعب عليك أن تبدأ مشروعات جديدة؟ لا نعم
- 21) هل تشعر بأنك ملئ بالطاقة؟ لا نعم
- 22) هل تشعر بأن موقفك يدعو لليأس؟ لا نعم
- 23) هل تشعر بأن معظم الناس أحسن حالا منك؟ لا نعم
- 24) هل كثيراً ما تنزعج على أشياء صغيرة؟ لا نعم
- 25) هل كثيراً ما تشعر بأنك على وشك البكاء؟ لا نعم
- 26) هل لديك صعوبة في التركيز؟ لا نعم
- 27) هل تستمتع بالاستيقاظ في الصباح؟ لا نعم
- 28) هل تفضل تجنب اللقاءات الاجتماعية؟ لا نعم
- 29) هل من السهل عليك اتخاذ القرارات؟ لا نعم
- 30) هل عقلك بنفس الوضوح الذي تعودت عليه؟ لا نعم