

Geriatric Depression Scale — 15-item (GDS-15)

Category: Geriatrics, Psychiatry | Items: 15 | Time: ~2-3 min

Description / When to Use

Depression screening in older adults

Instructions for Respondent

Please read each statement carefully and respond based on how you have felt over the specified time period. There are 15 items in this scale. Estimated completion time: 2-3 min.

Scale Items

1. Are you basically satisfied with your life?
0 = Yes | 1 = No
2. Have you dropped many of your activities and interests?
1 = Yes | 0 = No
3. Do you feel that your life is empty?
1 = Yes | 0 = No
4. Do you often get bored?
1 = Yes | 0 = No
5. Are you in good spirits most of the time?
0 = Yes | 1 = No
6. Are you afraid that something bad will happen to you?
1 = Yes | 0 = No
7. Do you feel happy most of the time?
0 = Yes | 1 = No
8. Do you often feel helpless?
1 = Yes | 0 = No
9. Do you prefer staying home, rather than going out and doing new things?
1 = Yes | 0 = No
10. Do you feel you have more problems with memory than most?
1 = Yes | 0 = No
11. Do you think it is wonderful to be alive now?
0 = Yes | 1 = No
12. Do you feel pretty worthless the way you are now?
1 = Yes | 0 = No
13. Do you feel full of energy?
0 = Yes | 1 = No
14. Do you feel that your situation is hopeless?
1 = Yes | 0 = No
15. Do you think most people are better off than you?
1 = Yes | 0 = No

Scoring Guide

Sum all 15 items. Total range 0-15.

Cutoff Interpretation

Score Range	Severity	Recommended Action
0–4	Normal	No depression suggested.
5–8	Mild depression	Mild depression — discuss with clinician.
9–11	Moderate depression	Moderate depression — clinical assessment indicated.
12–15	Severe depression	Severe depression — urgent clinical assessment.

Psychometric Properties

See original validation study for reliability and validity data.

License

Free to use — public domain or open access.

Citation (APA Format)

Sheikh JI, Yesavage JA. Clin Gerontol. 1986;5(1-2):165-173.

DOI: 10.1300/J018v05n01_09

Disclaimer: Screening tool, not a diagnostic instrument. Educational use only.