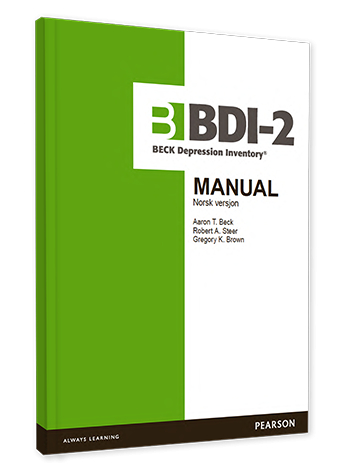
Identify High-Risk Students Using the Beck Depression Inventory Scale (Second Edition)

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# Abstract

Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) is a widely used tool for assessing depressive symptom severity. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of BDI. The BDI is a self-rating tool, designed to measure the intensity of depression symptoms.

Through the use of secondary research, interviews, and testing, the research team concluded that the Beck Depression Inventory is a valid and reliable test to determine possible depressive symptoms. The team also found that although the Beck Depression Inventory is a valid and reliable test, it should be used to help identify symptoms of depression, not to identify depression on its own.

We recommend that the test be made available to all students at Kennesaw State University to help identify students at risk for depression. It will also promote mental health and well-being for students at Kennesaw State University.

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# Introduction

The purpose is to identify the students who are at risk for depression or other mental health conditions. The BDI test is a self-report assessment tool that measures the severity of depressive symptoms. By administering the test to KSU students, mental health professionals can identify students who may need additional support and intervention.

Implementing the BDI test once a semester can have a few benefits:

* Early identification.
* Help monitoring mental health.
* Improving academic performance
* Reducing stigma.

# Methods

Throughout our research project, the research team used several methods as outlined in our research proposal. The team performed secondary research to begin the research process with statistical analysis and content analysis. The research team started the research with secondary research to help the team gain insights into the Beck Depression Inventory before primary research is conducted. Statistical Analysis was performed so that the team had a set of data to learn as much as they could about the Beck Depression Inventory and what has already been researched. Content Analysis was performed to get a general understanding of the analyses that are already done, and then the research team found the concepts that occurred most commonly in these analyzed texts.

The research team then performed interviews with Experts of the Beck Depression Inventory. The team interviewed five counselors around the United States that have conducted the testing of the Beck Depression Inventory. The qualifications for the counselors that were interviewed were that the counselor needed to have performed the testing a minimum of two individual times, needed a master degree in a related field, and needed to display a good understanding of depression and how the test works. To pick our list of counselors, the research team published a public survey that contained questions about qualifications, Beck Depression Inventory, and other questions related to our research. This survey contained mostly open-ended questions so that the counselor can give their own experience in their own words. There were a few multiple choice questions that helped get general information about the candidate, their job experience, and their relative experience with the Beck Depression Inventory and it’s testing. After the survey was closed, the team reviewed the surveys and chose the candidates they believed were the best representatives of what the team was looking for. After choosing our top candidates, the research team conducted the interviews to gain further insight into their experiences and opinions of the Beck Depression Inventory.  These interviews were performed over Microsoft Teams while recording them to allow the research team to conduct further analysis on the interview at a later date.

We performed testing of the Beck Depression Inventory with twenty subjects to gather a statistical basis. After the testing was performed, we asked several questions to the subjects about the test, the testing procedure, and how they felt about how the test evaluated them. This allowed us to relate the subjects' experience with the test, procedure, and their opinion, to how that individual scored on the test.

After conducting all the secondary and primary research, we analyzed the data for causation and correlation and used that information to gather the research team's initial conclusion on the validity of the Beck Depression Inventory. This conclusion is shared in this Technical Recommendation Report with the results from analyzing our research methods.

# Results

Prior research shows great support for the validity and reliability of the Beck Depression inventory. Most importantly, content validity for the inventory is high, with the inventory covering 6 out of 9 of the depression diagnosis criteria from the DSM-V (Richter et al., 1998). The test also shows good reliability and the results are replicable.

A screenshot of a computer

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Figure 1: 6 Symptoms of Depression evaluated in the BDI Test



Description automatically generatedThe results from the candidate surveys in search of competent counselors to interview were successful. Most of the candidates who reported back were licensed counselors with at least a masters degree in psychology and with prior experience working with depression. Of those candidates, those who were chosen had 10 or more years of experience in the field.

Figure 2: Interview Answers from Counselors

The interviews conducted with the counselors resulted in further insight into the Beck Depression Inventory. Among the five interviews, several conclusions could be drawn. First, all counselors agreed that the inventory was a valid way to determine if an individual may need help of some sort (therapy, medication, or stress support and coping skills learning). Second, all of the experts agreed that the Beck Inventory should not be used as a sole diagnostic tool–that is, labeling individuals with clinical depression. Third, all counselors agreed that the test provided helpful insights into the individual struggles for the participant and the professional aid. These results helped solidify that the Beck Depression Inventory is a useful test to use for our research.

Diagram

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Figure 3: Post-BDI testing answers from test takers

Finally, the results from 20 test students taking the Depression Inventory produced useful insights. Of the 20 students, 19 reported being honest in their responses on the test. Most students agreed that the test was easy to understand. More than half of the students felt that the test accurately evaluated their mental state. Of these students, 2 revealed that they considered depressive symptoms they hadn’t noticed in themselves before.

The research team also evaluated all 20 students for any stress or negative emotional side effects that may have resulted from the taking of the test. No negative symptoms, increased stress, or increased anxiety were reported as a direct result of answering the questionnaire.

# Analysis

The results section confirms the researchers’ idea that the Beck Depression Inventory is a valid and reliable test to determine possible depressive symptoms in students at Kennesaw State University. Conducting a BDI test at KSU can have many benefits. It can help identify students who are at risk for depression or other mental health conditions. BDI test can be used to monitor the mental health status of students over time. Also, conducting BDI test can help raise awareness and promote a culture of mental health support.

Conducting a BDI test at KSU can face some challenges. It may be difficult to encourage students to participate in the survey, especially if there are concerns about confidentiality. Administering the BDI test can be time-consuming and may require some special training.

# Recommendations

The researchers recommend that the Beck Depression Inventory should be made available to all students at Kennesaw State University once a semester. To monitor and support the mental health of the students.  All students should be encouraged, but not required, to take it. Information about the test’s purpose as well as interpreting its results should also be distributed alongside it. It is recommended that KSU works with mental health professionals to develop a protocol for administration, interpretations and follow-up of the survey data.

The researchers recommend that students with higher scores be given the option to submit their scores to KSU’s counseling services, where counselors will respond with resources specific to the symptoms the student scored high in (e.g., high score in stress and sleep issues results in a response of resources on stress coping mechanisms and nightly sleep routines, as well as an offering of KSU’s therapy services and medication management appointments).

Conducting a BDI survey is an effective way to monitor and support the mental health of students. By identifying students who may be at risk for depression, KSU can provide appropriate intervention and support services, thereby improving the overall well being of the students.

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