

The Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (HTQ) is Not a Screening Instrument. It is a ...

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Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

Magritte

“This is not a pipe.”

Discovery in the Clinic, 1981

- “The value of a simple test and a simple question”

The Original Life Events Debate

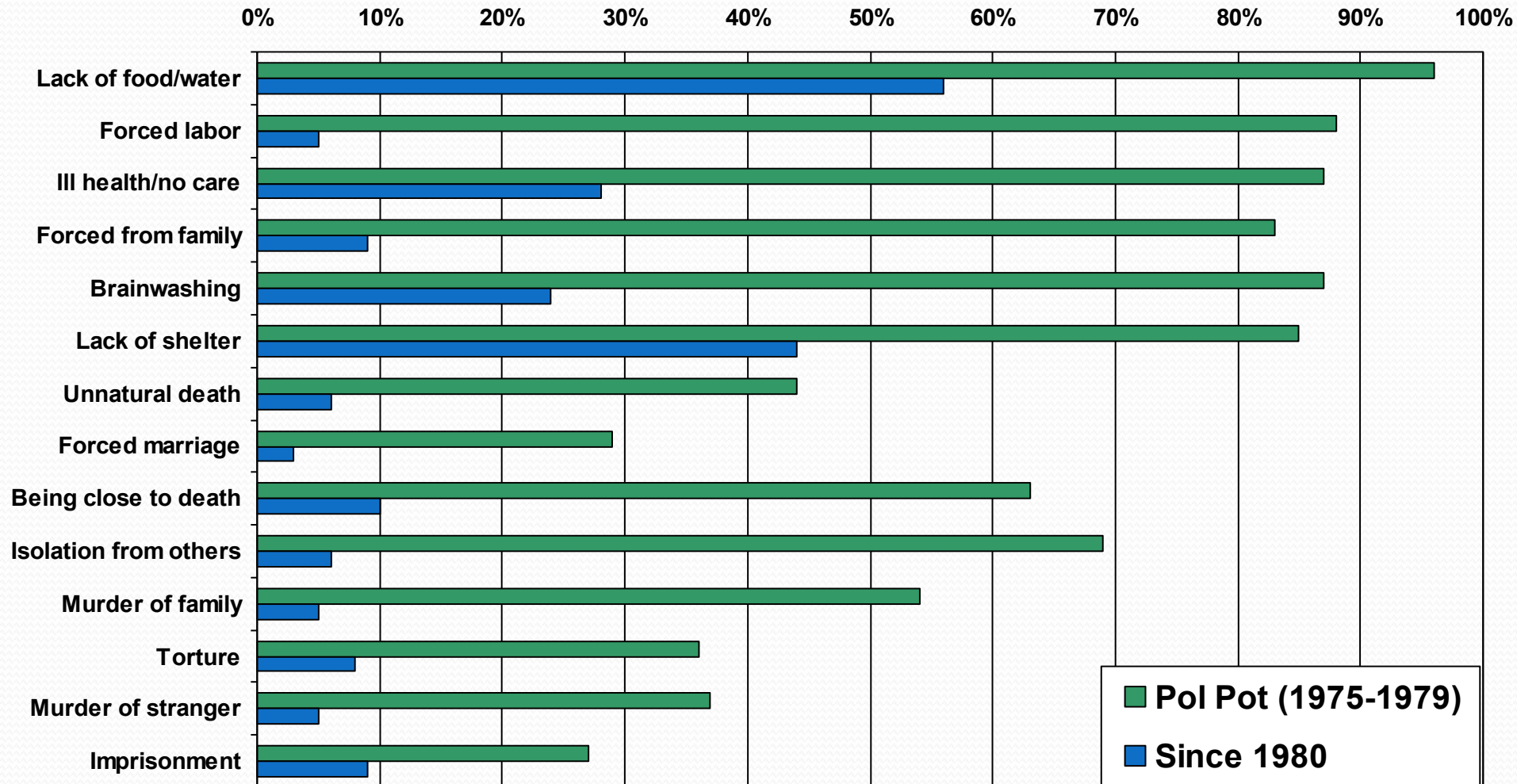
- Ask open-ended questions
- George Brown – LEDS – The Extensive Life Events Interview
- Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale





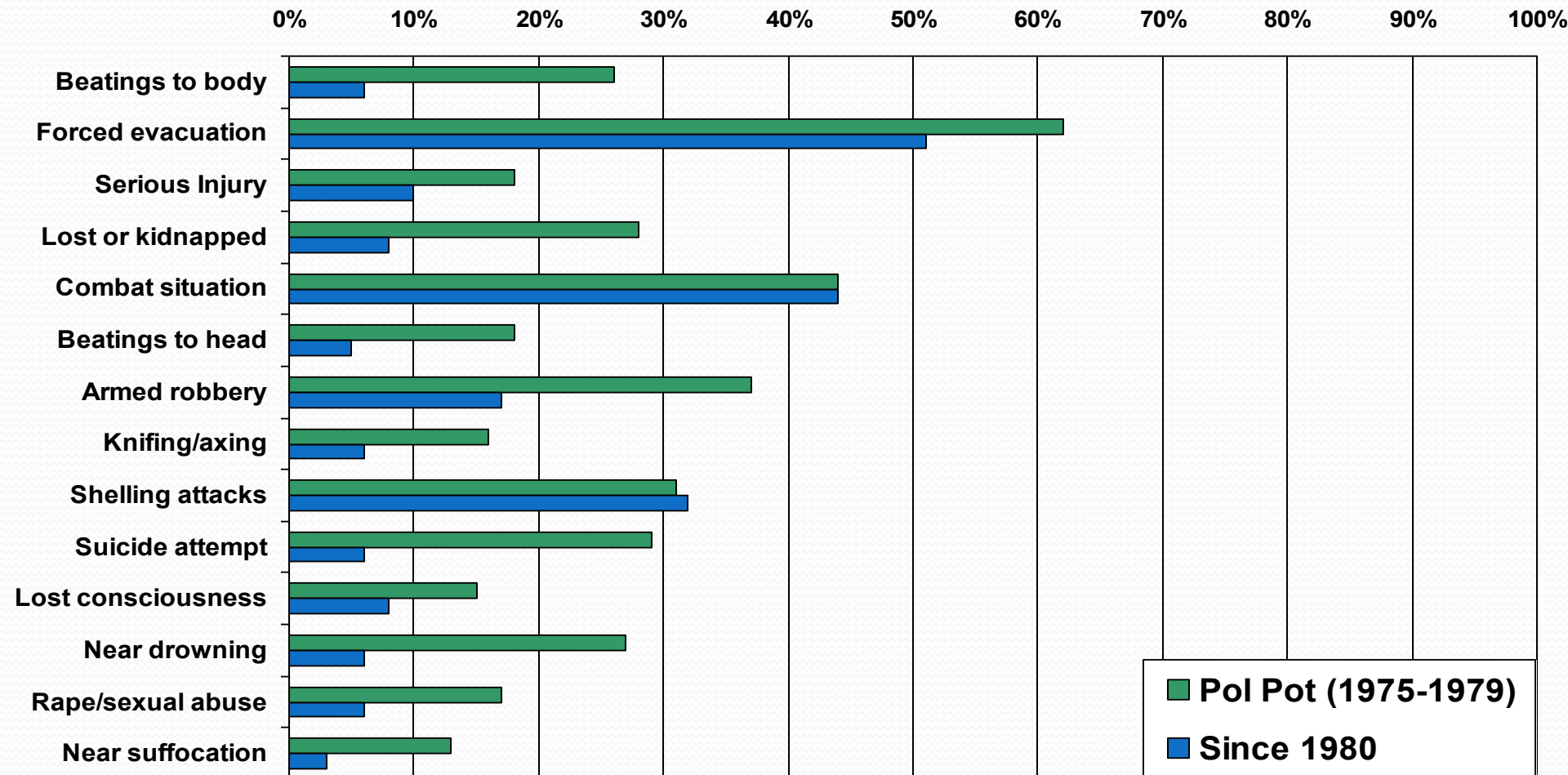
Trauma Events Experienced

During Pol Pot and Since 1980 (Part I)



Trauma Events Experienced

During Pol Pot and Since 1980 (Part II)



Depression and PTSD (Site 2)

Cambodian Refugees



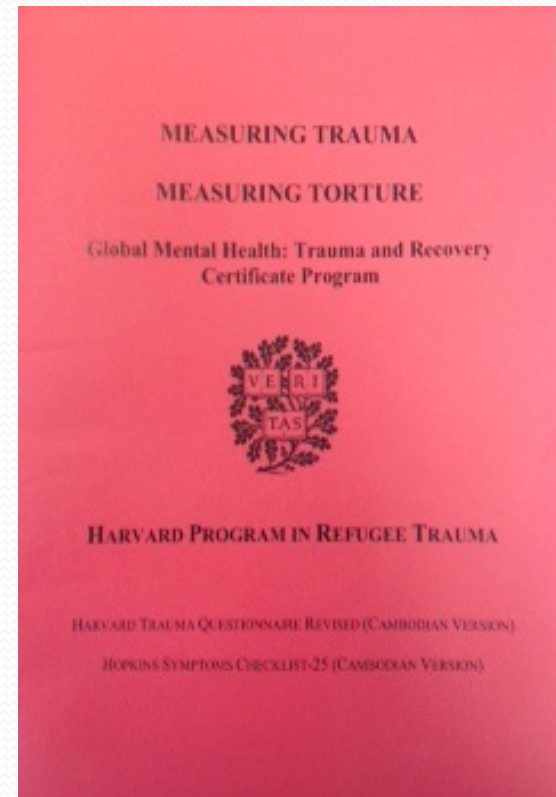
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Screening Instruments:

Design of HTQ

The HTQ is composed of five parts:

1. Trauma events
2. Personal description
3. Brain injury
4. Post-traumatic symptoms
5. Scoring of the instrument



Part I: Trauma Events

- **Earliest version of HTQ had 17 trauma events and 4 options:**

E = experienced

W = witnessed

H = heard about

N = No

- **In the HTQ Revised version (HTQ-R), response options have been simplified to “yes” or “no”.**
- **In the Site II Study (1989), a factor analysis identified 6 dimensions.**

Eight Trauma Dimensions and Examples (HTQ-R):

Category	Examples
Material deprivation	Lack of shelter, food or water
War-like conditions	Used as human shield
Bodily injury	Beating to the body
Forced confinement and coercion	Forced labor
Forced to harm others	Forced to harm relative
Disappearance, death or injury of loved ones	Kidnapping of spouse, murder of daughter
Witnessing violence to others	Witness torture, rape or sexual abuse
Head injury	Beatings to the head, suffocation

Torture History

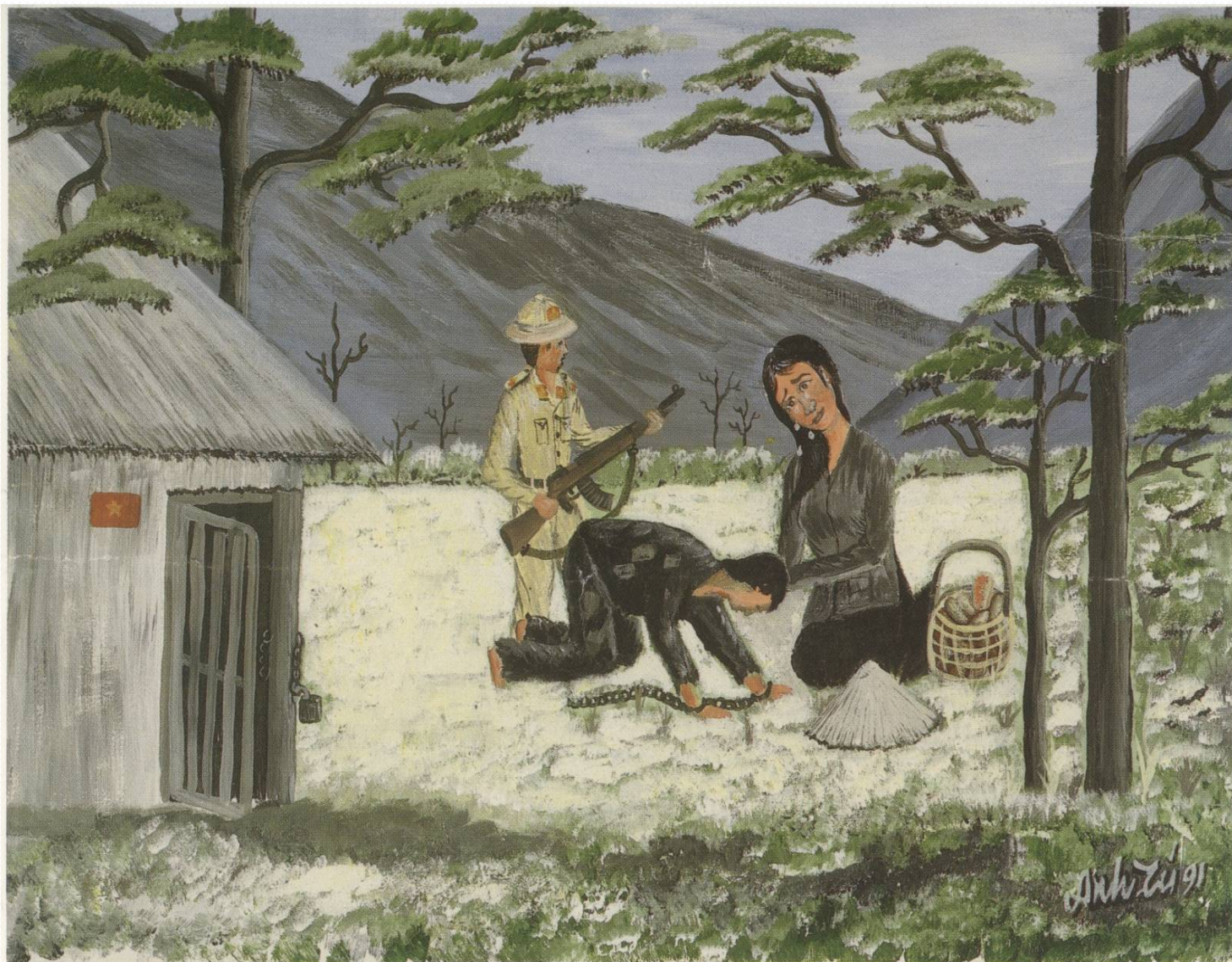
- The HTQ-R (item 11) operationalizes torture according to the World Medical Association Declaration of Tokyo adopted in 1975. We say: Torture i.e. while in captivity you received deliberate and systematic infliction of physical and mental suffering”.
- Example: brainwashing among Indochinese refugees was common, not among Bosnians.
- A list of 28 specific torture events has been included and can be used to determine what specific torture events had occurred (see HTQ-R).

Part II: Personal Description

This section allows respondents to record in an open-ended manner the worst event that they had experienced during the period of exposure to mass violence and persecution. It provides the clinician or researcher with insight into the respondents' own subjective experiences and relative weight that is assigned to a particular event.

Part III: Brain Injury

- This section was also added to HTQ-R as evidence indicated that head trauma was frequent among populations who had experienced extensive violence.
- Brain injury is often associated with psychiatric symptoms and impaired social functioning.
- Some of the psychological symptoms reported by torture and trauma survivors may be secondary to organic central nervous dysfunction (shrapnel, bullet wounds, starvation).



Part IV: Post Traumatic Symptoms

- The HTQ-R includes 40 symptoms, items similar to the HTQ (original).
- The first 16 were derived from DSM-IV criteria for PTSD.
- Items 17 to 40 aim to gauge personal perceptions of psychosocial functioning in response to the complex stresses of persecution, violence and displacement.

(continued)



- The clinical importance of refugee specific symptoms still needs to be determined.
- The original 14 refugee-specific items were expanded to 24 items in six underlying domains of social functioning that are now included in the HTQ-R (SPIESS).



Cultural “Categorical Fallacy”

Mental illness may be universal but the explanatory models and idioms of illness are culturally determined. Western diagnoses cannot be privileged over local folk diagnoses.

Validity

- **Face Validity** [How good is the measure at face value?]
- **Content Validity** [Does the measure cover all of the content?]
- **Criterion Validity** [Does the measure reflect the major aspects of a construct?] “Gold Standard Test”
- **Construct Validity** [How well does a measure reflect reality?]

Part V: Scoring

The symptom section is scored as follows:

1. For the responses to each item, assign the following numbers:

1 = not at all

2 = a little

3 = quite a bit

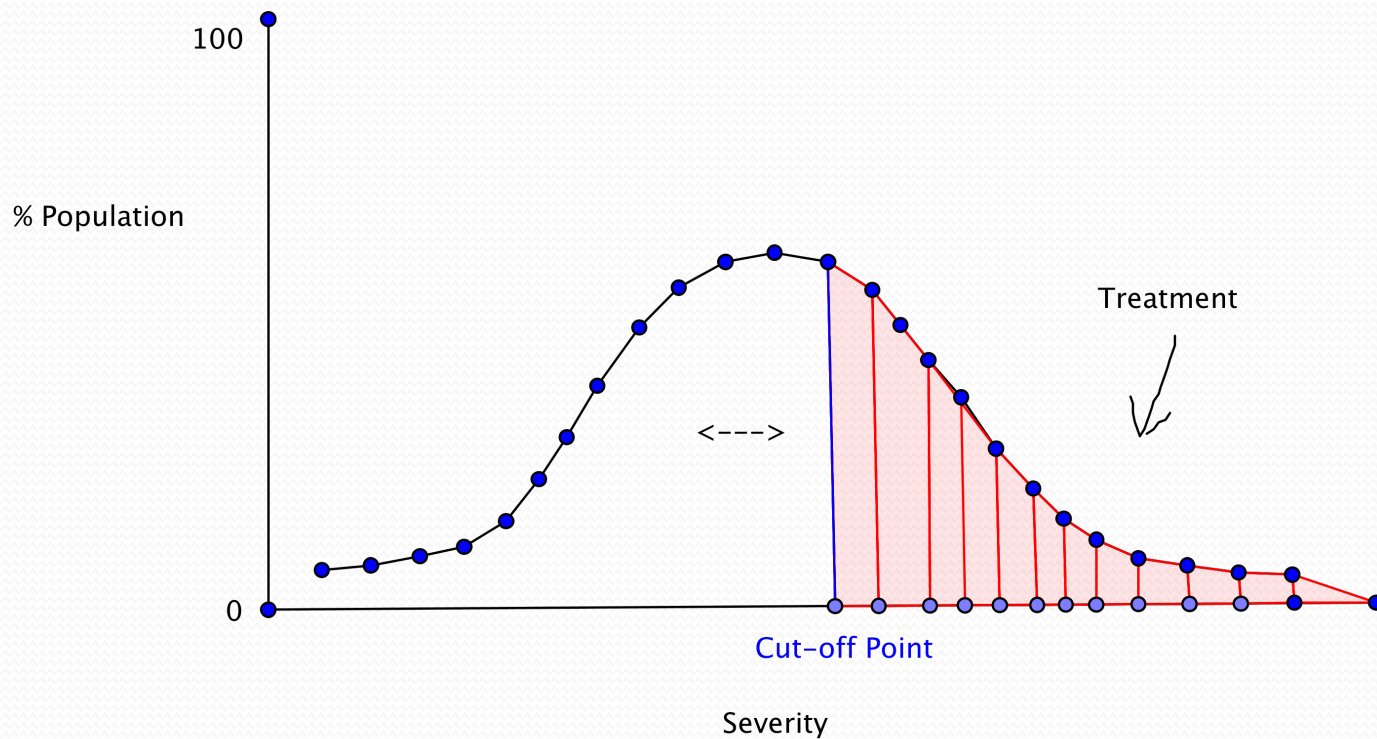
4 = extremely

2. Add up the items 1-40 and divide by 40 to get the total score:

Total Score:
$$\frac{\text{item 1} + \text{item 2} + \dots + \text{item 40}}{40}$$

Cut-Off Point

Establishing a Cut-off Point for Mental Health Screening and Treatment



The HTQ is:

1. An Ethnographic Tool

- Cultural meaning of trauma
- Cultural symptoms of emotional distress
- Folk diagnosis

2. Human Rights Instrument

3. Opportunity for a Conversation with the Patient

The HTQ is:

- 4. Diagnostic Tool
- 5. Clinical Tool for Treatment
- 6. Screening Instrument
- 7. Research Instrument

Resources

Measuring Trauma, Measuring Torture:

[http://hpert-cambridge.org/
screening/simple-depression-
screen/measuring-trauma-
measuring-torture/](http://hpert-cambridge.org/screening/simple-depression-screen/measuring-trauma-measuring-torture/)

Website: www.hpert-cambridge.org