# PHQ-9 (Patient Health Questionnaire-9)

## INPUTS

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| --- | --- |
| Little interest or pleasure in doing things? | **Options:**   * Not at all (0) * Several days (1) * More than half the days (2) * Nearly every day (3) |
| Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless? | **Options:**   * Not at all (0) * Several days (1) * More than half the days (2) * Nearly every day (3) |
| Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much? | **Options:**   * Not at all (0) * Several days (1) * More than half the days (2) * Nearly every day (3) |
| Feeling tired or having little energy? | **Options:**   * Not at all (0) * Several days (1) * More than half the days (2) * Nearly every day (3) |
| Poor appetite or overeating? | **Options:**   * Not at all (0) * Several days (1) * More than half the days (2) * Nearly every day (3) |
| Feeling bad about yourself — or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down? | **Options:**   * Not at all (0) * Several days (1) * More than half the days (2) * Nearly every day (3) |
| Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television? | **Options:**   * Not at all (0) * Several days (1) * More than half the days (2) * Nearly every day (3) |
| Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or so fidgety or restless that you have been moving a lot more than usual? | **Options:**   * Not at all (0) * Several days (1) * More than half the days (2) * Nearly every day (3) |
| Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or thoughts of hurting yourself in some way? | **Options:**   * Not at all (0) * Several days (1) * More than half the days (2) * Nearly every day (3) |
| Ask the patient: how difficult have these problems made it to do work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?  *Optional, not included in final score but may help assess global impairment* | **Options:**   * Not at all * Somewhat difficult * Very difficult * Extremely difficult |

## FORMULA

Addition of the selected points.

## FACTS & FIGURES

The PHQ-9 is a validated, 9-question tool to assess for the degree of depression present in an individual; the last question is not scored, but is useful functionally to help the clinician assess the impact of the patient's symptoms on his or her life.

## EVIDENCE APPRAISAL

The PHQ-9 was initially developed by [Kroenke et al (2001)](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11556941), as a subset of 9 questions from the full PHQ, which had previously been derived and studied in a cohort of 6,000 patients in 8 primary care clinics and 7 obstetrics-gynecology clinics ([Spitzer 1999](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10568646)). PHQ-9 scores ≥10 were found to be 88% sensitive and also 88% specific for detecting MDD. Criterion validity was also assessed in a sample of 580 patients.

[Arroll et al (2010)](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20644190) validated the PHQ-9 as a screener for MDD in a cohort of 2,642 primary care patients and found slightly higher specificity (91%) and lower sensitivity (74%) at the same cutoff of 10 points.

The PHQ-9 has also been validated in several additional subpopulations, including in psychiatric patients ([Beard 2016](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26774513)), patients with medical comorbidities such as multiple sclerosis (Ferrando 2007) and Parkinson’s disease ([Chagas 2013](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23761457)), pregnant patients ([Sidebottom 2012](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22983357)), and in an occupational health setting ([Volker 2016](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26377480)).

A meta-analysis of 29 studies including 6,725 patients found similar sensitivity (88%, 95% CI 83-92%) and specificity (85%, 95% CI 82-88%) for a cutoff of ≥10 as did the previous studies, both overall and for subgroups. Notably, they found that when used in the primary care setting, only approximately 50% of patients screening positive on the PHQ-9 in fact had major depression ([Levis 2019](https://www.bmj.com/content/365/bmj.l1476)).