

AUDITORY VOCAL HALLUCINATION RATING SCALE (AVHRS)^{1,2}

(Jenner and Van de Willige, 2002)

The AVHRS is a structured interview to obtain detailed information about a patient's auditory vocal hallucinations in the past month.

For clinical and/or research purposes it is possible to evaluate one or more other time periods, e.g. past week, past year, lifetime, etc.

Below, one period is given: past month (mth), plus an opportunity to choose another period.

- **Rate the highest score that ever occurred in the time period, but if in doubt between two scores select the lowest.**
- **Rate '8' if the answer remains unclear, even after thorough probing.**
- **Rate '9' in case the question was not asked.**
- Mandatory questions (**Mq**) are in **bold**.
- Optional questions (*Oq*) are in *italic*.

Name: _____

Gender: M / F

Date of birth: _____

Diagnosis: _____

Date of administration: _____ Interviewer: _____

Duration of hearing voices: _____ months / years

Hallucinations in other modalities:

(month) **visual / olfactory / taste / tactile**

(.....) **visual / olfactory / taste / tactile**

¹ Translation into English: A.A. Bartels-Velthuis, G. van de Willige (both University Medical Center Groningen, University Center for Psychiatry, University of Groningen) and F.J. Nienhuis (WHO Training and Reference Center for SCAN and CIDI/University Medical Center Groningen, University Center for Psychiatry, University of Groningen).

² Bartels-Velthuis AA, Van de Willige G, Jenner JA, Wiersma D (2012). Consistency and reliability of the Auditory Vocal Hallucination Rating Scale (AVHRS) (2012). *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences*, **21**, 305-310.

AVHRS: interview

1a. Number of voices

Mq: How many voices did you hear in the past month, was it always just one voice or were there more voices?

Specify number of voices (past month:..... / other period:.....)

Note: If the patient heard only one voice, the next question can be skipped, but tick 1 at question 1b.

Remember to ask about 'the voice' instead of 'the voices' in the following questions.

1b. Separately or simultaneously

In case of multiple voices, ask:

Mq: Are these voices speaking separately (one by one) or together at the same time?

0	1	2	3	8	9
0	0	no voices in the given time period, or less than once a month			
1	1	always one voice			
2	2	several voices, always speaking separately ; number of voices: ...			
3	3	several voices, (occasionally) speaking simultaneously ; number of voices: ...			
8	8	not clear, even after probing			
9	9	not asked			

2. Hypnagogic and/or hypnopompic voices

Mq: At what time of day are you hearing the voice(s)?

Note: Ask all item responses.

1	2	3	4	8	9
1	1	there are only voices when falling asleep			
2	2	there are only voices during waking up			
3	3	there are voices when falling asleep and during waking up , but not at other times			
4	4	the voices may occur at all times ; when falling asleep, during waking up and at other times			
8	8	not clear, even after probing			
9	9	not asked			

3. Frequency

Mq: How often do you hear voices?

Note: If the response is unclear, present all response options.

0	1	2	3	4	8	9
0	0	no voices in the given time period, or less than once a month (specify frequency:)				
1	1	at least once a week				
2	2	at least once a day				
3	3	at least once an hour				
4	4	continuously , or with occasional interruptions of a few minutes *)				
8	8	not clear, even after probing				
9	9	not asked				

*) Scoring 4 on this question, implies a score of 4 on the next question also. In this case question 4 can be skipped. (Note: tick 4 for 'duration'.)

AVHRS: interview

4. Duration

Mq: When you hear voices, how long do they go on for?

Note: If the response is unclear, present all response options.

0	1	2	3	4	8	9
0	0	no voices in the given time period, or less than once a month				
1	1	only a few seconds , a transient experience				
2	2	a few minutes				
3	3	at least one hour				
4	4	several hours, consecutively or continuously				
8	8	not clear, even after probing				
9	9	not asked				

5. Location

Mq: When you hear voices, where does the sound seem to come from?

Oq: From inside or outside your head?

0	1	2	3	4	8	9
0	0	no voices in the given time period, or less than once a month				
1	1	only from inside the head				
2	2	both from inside and outside the head				
3	3	only from outside the head, but close to the ears				
4	4	only from outside the head, further away				
8	8	not clear, even after probing				
9	9	not asked				

6. Loudness

Mq: How loud are your voices?

Note: If the response is unclear, present all response options.

0	1	2	3	4	8	9
0	0	no voices in the given time period, or less than once a month				
1	1	more quiet than patient's own voice, e.g. whispering				
2	2	about the same as patient's own voice				
3	3	louder than patient's own voice				
4	4	very loud; shouting or screaming				
8	8	not clear, even after probing				
9	9	not asked				

AVHRS: interview

7. Origin of the voices

Mq: What do you think causes your voices?

Oq: Are the voices caused by something that is related to yourself (for instance your own thoughts, your own feelings, or by stress or anxiety), or are the voices caused by something outside yourself (other persons, spirits, extraterrestrial beings or something like that)?

If the patient refers to external cause, then ask:

Mq: You told me that the voices might be caused by How sure are you about that?

0	1	2	3	4	8	9
0	0	no voices in the given time period, or less than once a month				
1	1	patient thinks that the voices are caused by internal factors only (they are associated with him/herself)				
2	2	patient thinks that the voices are caused mainly internal ($\geq 50\%$), but there may also be external causes				
3	3	patient thinks that the voices are caused mainly external ($> 50\%$), but there may also be internal causes				
4	4	patient thinks that the voices are caused by external factors only				
8	8	not clear, even after probing				
9	9	not asked				

Note: Scoring of question 7: take the average in reference period.

8. Negative content

Mq: Do your voices say unpleasant, negative or annoying things? Or are they mostly neutral?

Mq: Do your voices also say positive things?

Mq: How often do your voices say negative things and how often do they say positive (or neutral) things?

Oq: Could you give me some examples of what the voices are saying? (Make a note of these examples.)

.....

0	1	2	3	4	8	9
0	0	the voices never say unpleasant, negative or annoying things				
1	1	the voices only occasionally say unpleasant, negative or annoying things				
2	2	more than occasionally but less than half of what the voices say is unpleasant, negative or annoying				
3	3	half or more of what the voices say is unpleasant, negative or annoying				
4	4	every time the voices say unpleasant, negative or annoying things				
8	8	not clear, even after probing				
9	9	not asked				

Note: If it is clear from question 8 that the voices are not unpleasant, negative or annoying, score 0 on question 9, and continue with question 10.

AVHRS: interview

9. Severity of negative content

Mq: You told me that the voices are unpleasant, negative or annoying. Do they say unpleasant, negative or annoying things about you or your family or only about other people? Or do they say only annoying things like cursing?

Mq: Do the voices forbid you to do certain things, like: “Don’t do this or that” or “Don’t tell or say this or that”?

Mq: Do the voices threaten you, or do they say that you have to hurt yourself or other people?

mth		
0	0	the voices are not unpleasant, negative or annoying
1	1	the voices are unpleasant, negative or annoying to a certain extent, but not unpleasant about the patient or his/her family (e.g. voices cursing or making remarks about other people)
2	2	the voices are saying unpleasant, negative or annoying things about the <u>behaviour of the patient or his/her family</u> , but not about the patient (e.g., "You're acting crazy or stupid." or "Your family doesn't want to see you any more").
3	3	the voices are saying unpleasant, negative or annoying things about the patient or his/her family <u>themselves</u> (e.g., "You are ugly, disturbed, mad, ..." or "Your parents are mad ...").
4	4	the voices are threatening the patient and/or are giving orders (e.g., instructions to hurt him/herself or others, to injure or grieve his/herself or his/her family)
8	8	not clear, even after probing
9	9	not asked

10. Frequency of distress or suffering

Mq: How often do you suffer from the voices?

Note: If the response is unclear, present all response options.

mth		
0	0	the voices never cause distress or suffering
1	1	the voices sometimes cause distress or suffering, but less than 50% of the time
2	2	half of the time the voices cause distress or suffering
3	3	most of the time the voices cause distress or suffering
4	4	the voices always cause distress or suffering
8	8	not clear, even after probing
9	9	not asked

Note: Scoring 0 on question 10, implies a score of 0 on question 11. In this case please tick 0 on the next question.

11. Intensity of distress or suffering

Mq: You just said you suffer from the voice(s). Could you tell me to what extent this affects you? How much do you suffer emotionally from them?

Note: If the response is unclear, present all response options.

mth		
0	0	the voices do not cause distress or suffering
1	1	the voices cause some distress or suffering
2	2	the voices cause serious distress or suffering
3	3	the voices cause severe distress or suffering, but it could be worse
4	4	the voices cause extreme distress or suffering, the worst that one could imagine
8	8	not clear, even after probing
9	9	not asked

AVHRS: interview

12. Interference with daily functioning

Mq: To what extent do the voices interfere with your daily life?

Oq: Do your voices interfere with chores and daily activities like work, study, housekeeping, shopping or other activities?

Oq: Do you get into trouble with your family or friends because of the voices? Can you give me an example?

Oq: Have the voices kept you from proper self-care, like washing or getting properly dressed, etc.

0	0	no interference with daily functioning Patient is capable of living independently, without problems in daily activities. Patient is able to maintain social and family relationships (if any).
1	1	limited interference with daily functioning The voices may affect concentration, but everyday activities and social and family relationships can be maintained. Patient can live without additional support.
2	2	moderate interference with daily functioning Some restrictions in everyday activities and/or social and family relationships. Patient is able to live at home, but needs support and/or coaching with everyday activities or supported employment.
3	3	severe interference with daily functioning Patient is frequently on sick leave and/or has job support. Day treatment or outpatient treatment may often be required. Patient keeps some everyday activities, self-care and social relationships.
4	4	complete interference with daily functioning Because of the voices hospitalization is required. Inability to maintain everyday activities and relationships. Self-care is severely disrupted.
8	8	not clear, even after probing
9	9	not asked

13. Control

Mq: Do you feel that you can manage or control your voices?

Oq: For instance, can you evoke them or let them disappear? Do they listen to you and do they do what you want them to do?

0	0	patient has full control over the voices; he/she can evoke them and let them disappear whenever he/she wants to.
1	1	patient has some control over the voices most of the time
2	2	patient has some control over the voices half of the time
3	3	patient has some control over the voices only occasionally
4	4	patient has no control over the voices; he/she can never evoke them, nor let them disappear.
8	8	not clear, even after probing
9	9	not asked

AVHRS: interview

14. Anxiety

Mq: Do the voices make you anxious?

Note: If the response is unclear, present all response options.

0	1	2	3	4	8	9
0	0	the voices never cause anxiety				
1	1	the voices hardly ever cause anxiety				
2	2	the voices sometimes cause anxiety				
3	3	the voices cause anxiety most of the time				
4	4	sometimes patient gets completely into a panic because of the voices				
8	8	not clear, even after probing				
9	9	not asked				

15. Interference with thinking

Mq: Do the voices interfere with your thoughts and thinking?

Note: If the response is unclear, present all response options.

0	1	2	3	4	8	9
0	0	no, the voices never interfere with thinking				
1	1	no, the voices hardly ever interfere with thinking				
2	2	yes, the voices sometimes interfere with thinking				
3	3	yes, most of the time the voices interfere with thinking				
4	4	yes, always interfere with thinking				
8	8	not clear, even after probing				
9	9	not asked				

16. 1st, 2nd or 3rd person voices

Explanation:

Voices representing aloud patient's own thoughts are called 1st person voices.

Voices talking to the patient or giving him instructions are called 2nd person voices.

Voices talking with each other about the patient are called 3rd person voices.

All three kinds of voices may be present, so rate all that apply.

Mq: Do the voices say aloud what you are thinking? For instance, "Oh, I am stupid". (If yes, score 1st person)

Mq: Are the voices talking to you? For instance, "You are stupid" (If yes, score 2nd person)

Mq: Are the voices talking with each other about you? For instance, "Look, he/she is doing the same stupid things again". (If yes, score 3rd person)

AVHRS: interview

nth		
0	0	no voices in the given time period, or less than once a month
0	0	no voices in the 1st person
1	1	yes, there are voices in the 1st person ; number: ...
8	8	not clear, even after probing
9	9	not asked
0	0	no voices in the 2nd person
1	1	yes, there are voices in the 2nd person ; number: ...
8	8	not clear, even after probing
9	9	not asked
0	0	no voices in the 3rd person
1	1	yes, there are voices in the 3rd person ; number: ...
8	8	not clear, even after probing
9	9	not asked

AVHRS: SCORING FORM

id patient:

date:

rater:

past month
.....

1a	Number of voices		
1b	Separately or simultaneously		
2	Hypnagogic and/or hypnopompic voices		
3	Frequency		
4	Duration		
5	Location		
6	Loudness		
7	Origin of the voices		
8	Negative content		
9	Severity of negative content		
10	Frequency of distress or suffering		
11	Intensity of distress or suffering		
12	Interference with daily functioning		
13	Control		
14	Anxiety		
15	Interference with thinking		
16	1 st , 2 nd or 3 rd person voices	1 st	
		2 nd	
		3 rd	

Duration of hearing voices: _____ months / years

Hallucinations in other modalities: (mth) **visual / olfactory / taste / tactile**
 (.....) **visual / olfactory / taste / tactile**