The Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2) - Overview

The PHQ-2 inquires about the frequency of depressed mood and anhedonia over the past two weeks. The PHQ-2 includes the first two items of the PHQ-9.

- The purpose of the PHQ-2 is not to establish final a diagnosis or to monitor depression severity, but rather to screen for depression in a “first step” approach.
- Patients who screen positive should be further evaluated with the PHQ-9 to determine whether they meet criteria for a depressive disorder.

Clinical Utility

Reducing depression evaluation to two screening questions enhances routine inquiry about the most prevalent and treatable mental disorder in primary care.

Scoring

A PHQ-2 score ranges from 0-6. The authors identified a PHQ-2 cutoff score of 3 as the optimal cut point for screening purposes and stated that a cut point of 2 would enhance sensitivity, whereas a cut point of 4 would improve specificity.

Psychometric Properties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Depressive Disorder (7% prevalence)</th>
<th>Any Depressive Disorder (18% prevalence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHQ-2 Score</td>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>92.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Because the PPV varies with the prevalence of depression, the PPV will be higher in settings with a higher prevalence of depression and lower in settings with a lower prevalence.*

## The Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Over the past 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?</th>
<th>Not At all</th>
<th>Several Days</th>
<th>More Than Half the Days</th>
<th>Nearly Every Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Feeling down, depressed or hopeless</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>