

Brief description:

The PHQ-9 is a self-report questionnaire used for screening, diagnosing, monitoring, and measuring the severity of depression. It focuses on problems experienced within the past 2 weeks. Items are based on frequency (not at all to nearly every day) and scored using a 4-point scale (0-3). The instrument also includes a functional health assessment with a response based on difficulty (not difficult at all to extremely difficult).

Notes:

- Score 0-4: none-minimal depression severity. Patient may not need depression treatment.
- Score 5-9: mild depression severity. Clinical judgment is to be used about treatment, based on patient's duration of symptoms and functional impairment.
- Score 10-14: moderate depression severity. Clinical judgment is to be used about treatment, based on patient's duration of symptoms and functional impairment.
- Score 15-19: moderately severe depression severity. Patient to be treated using antidepressants, psychotherapy or a combination of treatment.
- Score 20-27: severe depression severity. Patient to be treated using antidepressants with or without psychotherapy.
- Functional health assessment: Patient response of 'very difficult' or 'extremely difficult' suggest that the patient's functionality is impaired. After treatment begins, functional status and number score can be measured to assess patient improvement.
- Major depressive disorder (MDD) is suggested if:
 - Of the 9 items, 5 or more are checked as at least 'more than half the days'
 - Either item 1 or 2 is checked as at least 'more than half the days'
- Other depressive syndrome is suggested if:
 - Of the 9 items, between 2 to 4 are checked as at least 'more than half the days'
 - Either item 1 or 2 is checked as at least 'more than half the days'
- A PHQ-9 score ≥ 10 has a sensitivity of 88% and a specificity of 88% for major depression.
- This scoring manual is intended to be used only with the questionnaire version on braincode.ca.

Construct	Type of measure	Scoring	Variables from Data Dictionary
Total Score	Continuous	Summed scored of all 9 items	phq9_001 + phq9_002 + phq9_003 + phq9_004 + phq9_005 + phq9_006 + phq9_007 + phq9_008 + phq9_009
Measurement of functional difficulties	Categorical	Not difficult at all – 0, somewhat difficult – 1, very difficult – 2, extremely difficult – 3	phq9_010

Reference: Kroenke K, Spitzer RL, Williams JB. The PHQ-9: Validity of a brief depression severity measure. J Gen Intern Med. 2001;16(9):606-613.