Purpose The PHQ is a 10-item scale intended to evaluate symptoms of depression as defined by the International Classification of Diseases-10. The questionnaire is a simple and inexpensive screening tool for clinical depression, designed to improve rates of diagnosis among primary care physicians. With its proven psychometric properties, it is also suitable for use in research.

Population for Testing The scale has been validated with a population of primary care patients between the ages of 18 and 65 years.

Administration The PHQ is a self-report, paper-and-pencil measure requiring no more than 5 min for completion.

Reliability and Validity The scale’s psychometric properties have been analyzed by Rizzo and colleagues [1]. Their research indicates an internal consistency of .79 and a test–retest reliability ranging from 38 to 62. Additionally, they found that a cutoff score of 9 yields a sensitivity of .78 and a specificity of .83. Approximately one-third of those individuals scoring above 9 were considered false positives. Researchers were also hoping the measure could be used to screen for individuals who might benefit from treatment with antidepressants; in this regard, a cutoff score of 10 provided good sensitivity (.84) and specificity (.78).

Obtaining a Copy A copy of the scale can be found in an article published by Rizzo and colleagues [1].

Scoring Respondents rate the frequency with which they have experienced each depressive symptom over the previous two weeks: scales range from 0 (“never”) to 2 (“most days”). Total scores fall between 0 and 20, with higher scores indicating more acute depressive symptoms. A cutoff score of 9 is recommended for identifying individuals at high risk of experiencing clinical depression.
PERSONAL HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE
This questionnaire asks you how you have been feeling in the past 2 weeks. Check the reply that most nearly applies to you in the following questions.

1. Have you been feeling sad or depressed most of the day?
2. Have you lost interest in things you generally enjoy?
3. Do you get tired easily, or lack energy?
4. Loss of confidence or self-esteem?
5. Had difficulty concentrating?
6. Had sleep disturbance of any kind?
7. Had decreased appetite with weight loss?
   or Notice increased appetite with weight gain?
8. Noticed that you are slowed up?
   or Inability to keep still?
9. Unreasonable feelings of self-reproach or guilt?
10. Thoughts of death, or thoughts of taking your own life?

If you have reported at least 4 of these symptoms, how long have you had such symptoms?
☐ Less than 1 month, ☐ 1 month to 1 year, ☐ More than 1 year, ☐ More than one year but getting worse recently.

Rizzo et al. [1]. © Cambridge Journals, reproduced with permission.

Reference

Representative Studies Using Scale