

Distress Questionnaire-5 (DQ5)

This scale is designed to assess levels of general psychological distress.

Usage: No permission required - please cite reference

In the last 30 days:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
My worries overwhelmed me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt hopeless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found social settings upsetting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had trouble staying focused on tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anxiety or fear interfered with my ability to do the things I needed to do at work or at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Scoring

The total score on the DQ5 is obtained by summing all of the responses, with “Never” scoring 1, “Rarely” 2, “Sometimes” 3, “Often” 4 and “Always” scoring 5. Total scores will range from 5-25. Scores of 11-14 indicate elevated distress and scores of 14 or higher indicate high psychological distress.

Psychometric properties

The DQ5 has been validated in two community-based sample of Australian adults, with accuracy compared to diagnostic criteria for depression and anxiety disorders.

Accuracy: The DQ5 had sensitivity of 76% and specificity of 89% in identifying clinical caseness for seven common mental health problems. It was significantly more accurate than the K6 and K10 in screening for mental health problems.

Internal consistency: The DQ5 had high internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = 0.86 and 0.91 in two large population-based samples).

Factor structure: Confirmatory factor analysis found good fit to a unidimensional construct reflecting general psychological distress (RMSEA=0.069, CFI=0.993, TLI=0.986). Seventy-five percent of variance was explained by the single factor.

Key references

Batterham PJ, Sunderland M, Carragher N, Calear AL, Mackinnon AJ, Slade T. (2016). The Distress Questionnaire-5: Population screener for psychological distress was more accurate than the K6/K10. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 71, 35-42.

Batterham PJ, Sunderland M, Slade T, Calear AL, Carragher N. (2018). Assessing distress in the community: Psychometric properties and crosswalk comparison of eight measures of psychological distress. *Psychological Medicine*, 48, 1316-1324.

Research centre

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Contacts

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