

## 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<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>1</sup>

| Major Depressive Disorder (7% prevalence) |             |             |                                  | Any Depressive Disorder (18% prevalence) |             |             |                                  |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| PHQ-2 Score                               | Sensitivity | Specificity | Positive Predictive Value (PPV*) | PHQ-2 Score                              | Sensitivity | Specificity | Positive Predictive Value (PPV*) |
| 1   | 97.6        | 59.2        | 15.4                             | 1  | 90.6        | 65.4        | 36.9                             |
| 2   | 92.7        | 73.7        | 21.1                             | 2  | 82.1        | 80.4        | 48.3                             |
| <b>3</b>                                  | <b>82.9</b> | <b>90.0</b> | <b>38.4</b>                      | <b>3</b>                                 | <b>62.3</b> | <b>95.4</b> | <b>75.0</b>                      |
| 4   | 73.2        | 93.3        | 45.5                             | 4  | 50.9        | 97.9        | 81.2                             |
| 5   | 53.7        | 96.8        | 56.4                             | 5  | 31.1        | 98.7        | 84.6                             |
| 6   | 26.8        | 99.4        | 78.6                             | 6  | 12.3        | 99.8        | 92.9                             |

\* 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.

1. Kroenke K, Spitzer RL, Williams JB. The Patient Health Questionnaire-2: Validity of a Two-Item Depression Screener. *Medical Care* 2003, (41) 1284-1294.

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

Patient Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Visit \_\_\_\_\_

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