

Agoraphobic Cognitions Questionnaire (ACQ)

The Agoraphobic Cognitions Questionnaire (ACQ) is used to assess the frequency of the irrational, catastrophic thoughts a person believes they are likely to have when in a situation of anxiety or panic. It helps identify the specific thought patterns that fuel fear and avoidance in adults with agoraphobia or panic disorder.

Number of questions	14 questions
Estimated duration	6 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Agoraphobic Cognitions Questionnaire
Target audience	Adults with agoraphobia
Authors	David M. Chambless, Thomas J. Caputo (1984)
Category	Phobias

Preview of the 14 questions

I am afraid of fainting in public.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always

It would be terrible to vomit in public.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always

I believe my bodily sensations are dangerous.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always

I fear losing control and behaving in an embarrassing way.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always

I fear having a heart attack when an attack occurs.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always

Scoring & interpretation

Each item is rated from 1 (*thought never occurs*) to 5 (*thought always occurs when I am nervous*) according to how often the thought occurs when the person is anxious. Each score is the mean of its items, from 1 to 5: the higher it is, the more frequent the anxiety-related catastrophic thoughts.

Subscales (item numbers)

- **Loss of Control**: 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14
- **Physical Concerns**: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10

The ACQ does not publish a clinical cutoff. Scores are interpreted against Chambless's reference means: for the total score, 1.60 (SD 0.46) in the general population and 2.43 (SD 0.63) in patients with agoraphobia with panic attacks. A score above the general population mean + 1 standard deviation is flagged.