HDRS

Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HDRS)

The Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HDRS) is a clinician-administered assessment tool that measures the severity of depressive symptoms in adults. It is mainly used to monitor the course of depression and to assess the effectiveness of treatments. Scoring requires clinical observation and a structured interview.

Number of questions	17 questions
Estimated duration	20 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Hamilton Depression Rating Scale
Target audience	Adults
Authors	Max Hamilton (1960)
Category	Depression

Preview of the 17 questions

Depressed mood (sadness, hopeless, helpless, worthless)

- 0 - Absent.
- 1 - These feeling states indicated only on questioning.
- 2 - These feeling states spontaneously reported verbally.
- 3 - Communicates feeling states non-verbally, i.e. through facial expression, posture, voice and tendency to weep.
- 4 - Patient reports virtually only these feeling states in his/her spontaneous verbal and non-verbal communication.

Feelings of guilt

- 0 - Absent.
- 1 - Self reproach, feels he/she has let people down.
- 2 - Ideas of guilt or rumination over past errors or sinful deeds.
- 3 - Present illness is a punishment. Delusions of guilt.
- 4 - Hears accusatory or denunciatory voices and/or experiences threatening visual hallucinations.

Suicide

- 0 - Absent.
- 1 - Feels life is not worth living.
- 2 - Wishes he/she were dead or any thoughts of possible death to self.
- 3 - Ideas or gestures of suicide.
- 4 - Attempts at suicide (any serious attempt rate 4).

Insomnia: early in the night

0 - No difficulty falling asleep.

1 - Complains of occasional difficulty falling asleep, i.e. more than 1/2 hour.

2 - Complains of nightly difficulty falling asleep.

Insomnia: middle of the night

0 - No difficulty.

1 - Patient complains of being restless and disturbed during the night.

2 - Waking during the night, any getting out of bed rates 2 (except for purposes of voiding).

Scoring & interpretation

Each item is rated by the examiner on a scale from 0 to 2 or 0 to 4, depending on the item. The total score is obtained by summing the items; the higher it is, the more severe the depression: <7 absent, 8-13 mild, 14-18 moderate, 19-22 severe, ≥23 very severe.