SSS-8

Somatic Symptom Scale-8 (SSS-8)

The SSS-8 is a brief self-report questionnaire designed to measure somatic symptom burden over the past 7 days. It explores eight common physical complaints, including gastrointestinal, back, or joint pain, fatigue, headaches, dizziness, palpitations or shortness of breath, and sleep problems. Widely used in primary care, psychosomatic medicine, and clinical psychology, it allows rapid identification of somatic symptom intensity, monitoring of their course, and assessment of the overall severity of somatic distress. It is a screening and monitoring tool, useful as a complement to the clinical interview, but it does not make a diagnosis on its own.

Number of questions	8 questions
Estimated duration	2 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Somatic Symptom Scale-8
Target audience	Adults
Authors	Birgit Gierk, Martin Kohlmann, Kurt Kroenke, Lutz Spangenberg, Markus Zenger, Elmar Brähler, Bernd Löwe (2014)

Preview of the 8 questions

During the past 7 days, how much have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

Stomach or bowel problems

Not at all | A little bit | Somewhat | Quite a bit | Very much

During the past 7 days, how much have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

Back pain

Not at all | A little bit | Somewhat | Quite a bit | Very much

During the past 7 days, how much have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

Pain in your arms, legs, or joints

Not at all | A little bit | Somewhat | Quite a bit | Very much

During the past 7 days, how much have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

Headaches

Not at all | A little bit | Somewhat | Quite a bit | Very much

During the past 7 days, how much have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

Chest pain or shortness of breath

Not at all | A little bit | Somewhat | Quite a bit | Very much

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Scoring & interpretation

Each item is scored from 0 to 4 according to how much the symptom has bothered the person over the past 7 days: 0 = not at all, 1 = a little bit, 2 = somewhat, 3 = quite a bit, 4 = very much. The total score ranges from 0 to 32; the higher it is, the greater the somatic symptom burden. The most widely used cutoffs are: 0-3 minimal, 4-7 low, 8-11 medium, 12-15 high, 16-32 very high. Interpretation must be integrated into the patient's medical and psychological context.

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