

University of Wollongong

Research Online

Faculty of Social Sciences - Papers (Archive)

Faculty of Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities

2012

Assessing depression in older adults in the emergency department: Reliability of the 5-item Geriatric Depression Scale

M Bissett

University of Western Sydney

A Cusick

University of Wollongong, acusick@uow.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/sspapers>



Part of the [Education Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Assessing depression in older adults in the emergency department: Reliability of the 5-item Geriatric Depression Scale

Abstract

Abstract presented at the IFA 11th Global Conference on Ageing, 28 May-1 June 2012, Prague, Czech Republic

Keywords

assessing, depression, geriatric, older, scale, adults, emergency, department, reliability, 5, item

Disciplines

Education | Social and Behavioral Sciences

Publication Details

Bissett, M. & Cusick, A. (2012). Assessing depression in older adults in the emergency department: Reliability of the 5-item Geriatric Depression Scale. Ageing Connects: 11th Global Conference on Ageing - Book of Abstracts (p. 178). Prague, Czech Republic: International Federation on Ageing.

Abstract ID: 745

ASSESSING DEPRESSION IN OLDER ADULTS IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT: RELIABILITY OF THE 5-ITEM GERIATRIC DEPRESSION SCALE.

Authors:

¹M. Bissett (Presenter), ²A. Cusick

Institutions:

¹Lecturer, Occupational Therapy, University of Western Sydney, Penrith South DC, NSW 1797, Australia; ²Professor and Head, School of Health Sciences, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW 2522, Australia

It has been identified that 30% of older adults in hospital emergency departments have depression in addition to their presenting medical problem. This is not surprising as depression is the most common mental health disorder in older adults. Emergency department (ED) assessment of older people does not, however, include routine screening for depression. This is despite evidence linking depression to functional decline, increased ED use, morbidity and mortality. Routine screening for depression in older people who present to emergency departments is well supported, however, must be completed with a psychometrically sound assessment. One standardised approach used to screen the mental health of older people is the 5-item Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS-5). To date this has not been examined for use with older people who present to the ED.

Study aim: The internal reliability of the GDS-5 with older adults who presented to the ED was examined.

Methods: The GDS-5 was administered to patients who had attended the ED in the prior week and were discharged directly home. The GDS-5 was administered by phone. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha and item-to-total correlations.

Results: The GDS-5 was administered to 103 patients. Average age was 79 ± 9.1 years (69 females, 34 males). Fifty percent of patients screened positively for depression. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.5.

Conclusion: The GDS-5 has been verified as a suitable screening tool to detect depression in older adults in a range of clinical settings. This study found 50% of older adults screened positively for depression. Internal reliability was low, consistent with previous research completed with inpatient and outpatient older adults. This presentation discusses psychometric findings in relation to selecting the best option for assessing the mental health needs of older adults presenting to the ED.

connects