

Cornell Scale for Depression in Dementia

Instructions: This scale should be completed on all residents being assessed. The ratings should be based on symptoms and signs occurring during the week prior to completion. No score should be given if symptoms result from physical disability or illness.

Email	Print	Save form	Reset form	Unable to rate	Absent	Mild or only happens from time to time	Severe
Please select your responses							
Mood							
1. Anxiety: anxious expression, ruminations, worrying				A	0	1	2
2. Sadness: sad expression, sad voice, tearfulness				A	0	1	2
3. Lack of reactivity to pleasant events: does not cheer up when offered pleasant activities				A	0	1	2
4. Irritability: easily annoyed, short tempered				A	0	1	2
Behavioural disturbance							
5. Agitation: restlessness, hand-wringing, hair-pulling				A	0	1	2
6. Slowness: slow movements, slow speech, slow reactions				A	0	1	2
7. Multiple physical complaints: complains about physical health more than is reasonable (score 0 if gastro-intestinal symptoms only)				A	0	1	2
8. Loss of interest: less involved in usual activities (score 1 or 2 only if change occurred acutely, i.e. in less than 1 month)				A	0	1	2
Physical signs							
9. Appetite loss: eating less than usual				A	0	1	2
10. Weight loss: score 2 if greater than 2.5 kg in 1 month				A	0	1	2
11. Lack of energy: fatigues easily, unable to sustain activities (score only if change occurred acutely, ie in less than 1 month)				A	0	1	2
Changes in daily/nightly mood and behaviours							
12. Changes of mood: mood changes as the day progresses with symptoms worse in morning				A	0	1	2
13. Difficulty falling asleep: later than usual for this individual				A	0	1	2
14. Multiple awakenings during sleep: wakes up more often than is usual for this individual				A	0	1	2
15. Early morning awakening: earlier than usual for this individual				A	0	1	2
Ideational disturbance							
16. Suicide: feels life is not worth living, has suicidal wishes or makes suicide attempt				A	0	1	2
17. Poor self esteem: self-blame, self-depreciation, feelings of failure				A	0	1	2
18. Pessimism: anticipation of the worst, thinks things are always going to go wrong				A	0	1	2
19. Depressing delusions: delusions of poverty, illness or loss. Cannot be convinced that they are not poor or ill or that they have lost something or somebody.				A	0	1	2
Total = add all 1s + 2s in the shaded area							

Cornell Scale for Depression – Alexopoulos, G.S., Abrams, R. C., Young, R.C. and Shamoian, C. A. Cornell Scale for Depression in Dementia, Biological Psychiatry, 1988; 23: 272-284. Some definitions have been expanded to improve their understanding in an Australian nursing home context.