

Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) Information Page

The Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) was developed as a basic screening measure for depression in older adults. The purpose of the GDS is to obtain the patient's own perception of their depression. The 15 question short version of the GDS is useful in helping to increase awareness of depressive symptoms. It is designed to be administered by individuals who have not had any specific training or experience with mental health issues, or the GDS.

Please note that the GDS is a screening tool only, and not a means for diagnosis. The GDS screens for the following 7 characteristics of depression in the elderly:

1. Somatic concern
2. Lower affect
3. Cognitive impairment
4. Feelings of discrimination
5. Impaired motivation
6. Lack of future orientation
7. Lack of self-esteem

The scoring scale on the GDS indicates that if a score is greater than “5” then a thorough clinical assessment **may** need to be undertaken.

Note: The GDS sensitivity diminishes in a patient with a MMSE of less than 24 (cognitively impaired patients).