

Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A)

Reference: Hamilton M. The assessment of anxiety states by rating. *Br J Med Psychol* 1959; 32:50-55.

Rating Clinician-rated

Administration time 10-15 minutes

Main purpose To assess the severity of symptoms of anxiety

Population Adults, adolescents and children

Scoring

Each item is scored on a scale of 0 (not present) to 4 (severe), with a total score range of 0-56, where <17 indicates mild severity, 18-24 mild to moderate severity and 25-30 moderate to severe.

Commentary

The HAM-A was one of the first rating scales developed to measure the severity of anxiety symptoms, and is still widely used today in both clinical and research settings. The scale consists of 14 items, each defined by a series of symptoms, and measures both psychic anxiety (mental agitation and psychological distress) and somatic anxiety (physical complaints related to anxiety). Although the HAM-A remains widely used as an outcome measure in clinical trials, it has been criticized for its sometimes poor ability to discriminate between anxiolytic and antidepressant effects, and somatic anxiety versus somatic side effects. The HAM-A does not provide any standardized probe questions. Despite this, the reported levels of inter-rater reliability for the scale appear to be acceptable.

Versions

The scale has been translated into: Cantonese for China, French and Spanish. An IVR version of the scale is available from Healthcare Technology Systems.

Additional references

Maier W, Buller R, Philipp M, Heuser I. The Hamilton Anxiety Scale: reliability, validity and sensitivity to change in anxiety and depressive disorders. *J Affect Disord* 1988;14(1):61-8.

Borkovec T and Costello E. Efficacy of applied relaxation and cognitive behavioral therapy in the treatment of generalized anxiety disorder. *J Clin Consult Psychol* 1993; 61(4):611-19

Address for correspondence

The HAM-A is in the public domain.

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MoodCheck

Part D.

How old were you when you first were depressed? (circle one)	As long as I can remember	Grade school	Middle school	High school	18-24	> 24
How many episodes of depression have you had?	One	2-4	5-6	>10		
Have antidepressants ever caused: (circle all that apply)	Excessive energy	Severe insomnia	Agitation	Irritability	Racing thoughts	Talking a lot
How many antidepressants have you tried, if any?	None	1	2	3	>3	
Has an antidepressant you took worked at first, then stopped working?	No			Yes		
Do your episodes start gradually, or suddenly?	Gradually	Can't say		Suddenly		
Do your episodes stop gradually, or suddenly?	Gradually	Can't say		Suddenly		
Did you have an episode after giving birth?	No	Within 6 months	Within 2 months	Within 2 weeks		
Are your moods much different at different times of year?	No effect of time of year			Yes, seasonal shifts		
When you are depressed, do you sleep differently?	No	Sleep less		Sleep more		
When you are depressed, do you eat differently?	No	Eat less		Eat more		
When you are depressed, what happens to your energy?	Nothing	It varies a lot	Very low	Extremely low, can hardly move		
In episodes, have you lost contact with reality? (delusions, voices, people thought you were odd)	No			Yes		

If your total score from Parts A and B is **greater than 16**; or if you have **lots of circles** in shaded boxes on this page, you may need to learn more about "mood swings without mania". Use the Internet and search *Bipolar II*. This is something to learn about, not necessarily about you.

If your total score from Parts A and B is **less than 10**, and you have **few circles** in shaded boxes on this page, antidepressants are probably okay, if you and your doctor choose to use them. They can occasionally cause: unusual thoughts, including violent and suicidal ones; irritability; too much energy; and severe sleep problems. Contact your doctor if you think any of these might be happening to you.

Your Name _____

Date _____