

## *Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS)*

### **What is the GDS?**

The Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) has a 15 and 30-item version that screens for symptoms of depression. It is not intended for diagnosing depression. The GDS is most effective at identifying moderate to severe depression. It can be completed in written or oral form (i.e., over the phone) allowing its use for patients with hearing or visual impairments. The 15-item version takes approximately 3 minutes to administer while the 30-item version takes approximately 5-7 minutes.

### **Population the Test Serves**

It can be used in a variety of settings such as in the community, inpatient and outpatient practice settings.

### **Importance of GDS**

Depression is significantly under-diagnosed in non-psychiatrist professions leading to no or limited treatment for depression.<sup>1</sup> The GDS is a non-proprietary tool and can be administered by non-psychologist practitioners since no mental health training is required and no questions are related to suicide.

### **Psychometric Properties**

Excellent reliability (ICC >0.82) for 30 item and 15 item GDS with excellent reliability (ICC>0.81) across community, inpatient, outpatient, and nursing home settings.<sup>2</sup>

### **Cut-Off Scores**

GDS-15:  $\geq 5$  likely depression<sup>1</sup>

GDS-30: >11 likely depression<sup>1</sup>

### **Resources**

1. Mitchell AJ, Bird V, Rizzo M, Meader N. Diagnostic validity and added value of the Geriatric Depression Scale for depression in primary care: a meta-analysis of GDS30 and GDS15. *J Affect Disord.* 2010;125(1-3):10-17. doi:10.1016/j.jad.2009.08.019
2. Kieffer KM, Reese RJ. A reliability generalization study of the geriatric depression scale. *Educational and psychological measurement.* 2002;62(6):969-994.

**Shirley Ryan Ability Lab Rehabilitation GDS Page link:**

<https://www.sralab.org/rehabilitation-measures/geriatric-depression-scale#older-adults-and-geriatric-care>

**APTA Test and Measures Page for GDS:**

<https://www.apta.org/patient-care/evidence-based-practice-resources/test-measures/geriatric-depression-scale-gds>

**Videos explaining more information about the GDS:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z70hQO7nSiY>

**Link to Test**

GDS-15 Item: [https://geriatrictoolkit.missouri.edu/cog/GDS\\_SHORT\\_FORM.PDF](https://geriatrictoolkit.missouri.edu/cog/GDS_SHORT_FORM.PDF)

GDS-30 Item: <https://integrationacademy.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/Update%20Geriatric%20Depression%20Scale-30.pdf>

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