

Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale (Y-BOCS)

Description

The Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale (Y-BOCS) is a 10-item scale designed to measure the severity and type of symptoms in people with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) over the past seven days. The symptoms assessed are obsessions and compulsions. This scale is useful in tracking OCD symptoms at intake and during/after treatment.

Validity

This scale was validated by Goodman et al. (1989b) who found that the Y-BOCS was significantly correlated with two independent measures of OCD. The same study also showed that the Y-BOCS is sensitive to changes in OCD symptoms. The Y-BOCS also has high internal consistency and high interrater reliability (Goodman et al., 1989a).

Interpretation

Total Y-BOCS scores range from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating greater severity of OCD symptoms. Scores on the obsession and compulsion subscales range from 0 to 20, but only the total Y-BOCS score is interpreted. Total scores can be split into five categories, based on severity of symptoms. People who have a total Y-BOCS score:

- Under 7 are likely to be subclinical,
- 8-15 are likely to have a mild case of OCD,
- 16-23 are likely to have a moderate case of OCD,
- 24-31 are likely to have a severe case of OCD,
- 32-40 are likely to have an extreme case of OCD.

Developer

Goodman, W. K., Price, L. H., Rasmussen, S. A., Mazure, C., Fleischmann, R. L., Hill, C. L., ... Charney, D. S. (1989a). The Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale. I. Development, Use, and Reliability. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 46(11), 1006-1011.

References

Goodman, W. K., Price, L. H., Rasmussen, S. A., Mazure, C., Delgado, P., Heninger, G. R., & Charney, D. S. (1989b). The Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale. II. Validity. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 46(11), 1012-1016.

Instructions to Client

"Obsessions" are unwelcome and distressing ideas, thoughts, images or impulses that repeatedly enter your mind. They may seem to occur against your will. They may be repugnant to you, you may recognise them as senseless, and they may not fit your personality.

"Compulsions", on the other hand, are behaviours or acts that you feel driven to perform although you may recognise them as senseless or excessive. At times, you may try to resist doing them but this may prove difficult. You may experience anxiety that does not diminish until the behaviour is completed.

Rate the average occurrence of each item during the prior week up to and including the time of the interview.