

EXPERTS SAY SCREEN ALL ADULTS FOR DEPRESSION!

Depression is a common but treatable illness that occurs more often among parents. Many people who suffer don't realize they have a medical disease and could benefit from treatment.

The US Preventive Services Task Force recently recommended that all adults be checked for depression when they see a doctor. Parents of children who are cared for in this practice may see us more often than any other health care provider. The Task Force is considered the authority on preventive health care and we believe it is wise to follow their advice. It's our job because, if a parent is depressed, their child is affected. The child does better if the parent gets help.

For this reason, please take a minute to respond to the two statements below. We'll then take a look at your responses together during this visit.

Over the past two weeks, you have felt down, depressed, or hopeless.

True ___ False ___

If true, have you felt this way for

___ 1. several days, ___ 2. more than 1/2 the days, ___ 3. nearly every day

Over the past two weeks, you have felt little interest or pleasure in doing things.

True ___ False ___

If true, have you felt this way for

___ 1. several days, ___ 2. more than 1/2 the days, ___ 3. nearly every day

Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2)

The PHQ-2 is a depression risk screener derived from a longer 9 item self-administered Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)(29) depression diagnostic tool. The PHQ-2 has been validated in both primary care and obstetric populations and has been shown to perform as well as longer screening measures when compared to a research psychiatric interview.

The numbers next to the responses are summed for a total score ranging from 0 to 6. Screen positive at risk for major depression is a score of 3 or more. This measure has a sensitivity for major depression of 83%, a specificity of 92%, and a positive likelihood ratio of 2.9.* In primary care and Obstetric-Gynecology settings 38% had major depression and 75% of those who screened positive had a depressive disorder(major or minor/subthreshold) by psychiatric interview.*

This cut point was used to determine screen positive mothers needing discussion of the screening results in the Parental Depression Project. Pediatricians were informed that some parents who are at risk for major depressive disorders might not be detected using the cut point of 3. Discussion with mothers with lower symptom levels (1-2) was at the discretion of individual providers and mothers.

The introduction to parental screening proceeding the screener was developed by the Parental Depression project to explain why parents were being screened and prepare parents for discussion of the screener.

*Kroenke K, Spitzer RL, Williams JB. The Patient Health Questionnaire-2: Validity of a Two-Item Depression Screener. *Med Care* 2003;41(11):1284-1292.