

Pediatric Symptom Checklist

PSC-17 Description

The PSC-17 is a general mental health screening tool designed to be simple to use in primary care practices, based a longer form instrument known as the PSC-35. It can help primary care providers assess the likelihood of finding any mental health disorder in their patient. The brief and easy to score PSC-17 has fairly good mental health screening characteristics, even when compared with much longer instruments like the CBCL (Child Behavior Checklist by T. Achenbach).

A 2007 study in primary care offices compared use of the PSC-17 to simultaneous use of the CBCL in 269 children aged 8-15, showing reasonably good performance of its three subscales compared to similar subscales on the CBCL. The gold standard here was a K-SADS diagnosis, which is a standardized psychiatric interview diagnosis. These comparison statistics are summarized below, with positive and negative predictive values shown based on different presumed prevalence (5 or 15%) of the disorders. Providers should notice that despite its good performance relative to longer such measures, it is not a foolproof diagnostic aid. For instance the sensitivity for this scale only ranges from 31% to 73% depending on the disorder in this study:

| K-SADS Diagnosis | Screen | Sensitivity | Specificity | PPV 5% | PPV 15% | NPV 5% | NPV 15% |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| ADHD | PSC-17 Attention | 0.58 | 0.91 | 0.25 | 0.53 | 0.98 | 0.92 |
| | CBCL Attention | 0.68 | 0.90 | 0.26 | 0.55 | 0.98 | 0.94 |
| Anxiety | PSC-17 Internalizing | 0.52 | 0.74 | 0.10 | 0.26 | 0.97 | 0.90 |
| | CBCL Internalizing | 0.42 | 0.88 | 0.13 | 0.38 | 0.97 | 0.90 |
| Depression | PSC-17 Internalizing | 0.73 | 0.74 | 0.13 | 0.33 | 0.98 | 0.94 |
| | CBCL Internalizing | 0.58 | 0.87 | 0.19 | 0.44 | 0.98 | 0.92 |
| Externalizing | PSC-17 Externalizing | 0.62 | 0.89 | 0.23 | 0.50 | 0.98 | 0.93 |
| | CBCL Externalizing | 0.46 | 0.95 | 0.33 | 0.62 | 0.97 | 0.91 |
| Any Diagnosis | PSC-17 Total | 0.42 | 0.86 | 0.14 | 0.35 | 0.97 | 0.89 |
| | CBCL Total | 0.31 | 0.96 | 0.29 | 0.58 | 0.96 | 0.89 |

W Gardner, A Lucas, DJ Kolko, JV Campo "Comparison of the PSC-17 and Alternative Mental Health Screens in an At-Risk Primary Care Sample" JAACAP 46:5, May 2007, 611-618

PSC-17 Scoring:

PSC-17 Internalizing score positive if ≥ 5

PSC-17 Externalizing score positive if ≥ 7

PSC-17 Attention score positive if ≥ 7

PSC-17 Total score positive if ≥ 15

"Attention" diagnoses can include: ADHD, ADD

"Internalizing" diagnoses can include: Any anxiety or mood disorder

"Externalizing" diagnoses can include: Conduct disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, adjustment disorder with disturbed conduct or mixed disturbed mood and conduct

Pediatric Symptom Checklist-17 (PSC-17)

Caregiver Completing this Form: Date:.....

Name of Child:.....

| | Please mark under the heading that best fits your child | | | For Office Use | | |
|---|---|-----------|-------|----------------|---|---|
| | NEVER | SOMETIMES | OFTEN | I | A | E |
| 1. Fidgety, unable to sit still | | | | | | |
| 2. Feels sad, unhappy | | | | | | |
| 3. Daydreams too much | | | | | | |
| 4. Refuses to share | | | | | | |
| 5. Does not understand other people's feelings | | | | | | |
| 6. Feels hopeless | | | | | | |
| 7. Has trouble concentrating | | | | | | |
| 8. Fights with other children | | | | | | |
| 9. Is down on him or herself | | | | | | |
| 10. Blames others for his or her troubles | | | | | | |
| 11. Seems to be having less fun | | | | | | |
| 12. Does not listen to rules | | | | | | |
| 13. Acts as if driven by a motor | | | | | | |
| 14. Teases others | | | | | | |
| 15. Worries a lot | | | | | | |
| 16. Takes things that do not belong to him or her | | | | | | |
| 17. Distracted easily | | | | | | |
| (scoring totals) | | | | | | |

Scoring:

- Fill in unshaded box on right with: "Never" = 0, "Sometimes" = 1, "Often" = 2
- Sum the columns.
 PSC17 Internalizing score is sum of column I
 PSC17 Attention score is sum of column A
 PSC17 Externalizing score is sum of column E
 PSC-17 Total Score is sum of I, A, and E columns

Suggested Screen Cutoff:
 PSC-17 - I \geq 5
 PSC-17 - A \geq 7
 PSC-17 - E \geq 7
 Total Score \geq 15
Higher Scores can indicate an increased likelihood of a behavioral health disorder being present.

PSC-17 may be freely reproduced.
 Created by W Gardner and K Kelleher (1999), and based on PSC by M Jellinek et al. (1988)
 Formatted by R Hilt, inspired by Columbus Children's Research Institute formatting of PSC-17