

Name _____

Date _____

Mood Disorders Questionnaire

The following questions may help determine whether an antidepressant medication is appropriate for you. Check yes or no, as you go. Your nurse or doctor will help you score the test.

1. Has there ever been a period of time when you were not your usual self and
 - ... you felt so good or so hyper that other people thought you were not your normal self, or you were so hyper that you got into trouble? Yes No
 - ...you were so irritable that you shouted at people or started fights or arguments? Yes No
 - ...you felt much more self-confident than usual? Yes No
 - ...you got much less sleep than usual and found you really didn't miss it? Yes No
 - ...you were much more talkative or spoke faster than usual? Yes No
 - ...thoughts raced through your head or you couldn't slow your mind down? Yes No
 - ...you were so easily distracted by things around you that you had trouble concentrating or staying on track? Yes No
 - ...you had much more energy than usual? Yes No
 - ...you were much more active or did many more things than usual? Yes No
 - ...you were much more social or outgoing than usual; for example, you telephoned friends in the middle of the night? Yes No
 - ...you were much more interested in sex than usual? Yes No
 - ...you did things that were unusual for you that other people might have thought were excessive, foolish or risky? Yes No
 - ...spending money got you or your family into trouble? Yes No
2. If you checked YES to more than one of the above, have several of these happened during the *same period of time*? Yes No
3. How much of a *problem* did any of these cause you --- like being unable to work; having family, money, or legal troubles; getting into arguments or fights?
 No Problem Minor Problem Moderate Problem Serious Problem

For information about "mood swings without mania", now called Bipolar II see:

www.psycheducation.org

Hirschfeld RM, Williams JB, Spitzer RL, Calabrese JR, Flynn L, Keck PD Jr., Lewis L, McElroy SL, Post RM, Rapport DJ, Russell JM, Sachs GS, Zajecka J *Am J Psych* 157(11):1875 (appendix 1), November 2000. 7/Y/Y

PCP _____

Nurse _____

Score _____

Scoring the Mood Disorders Questionnaire

The following scores are the most indicative of having bipolar disorder. The authors found these scores include the most individuals who do have bipolar disorder, and “rule out” the most individuals who don’t have it.

Section 1	7 yes responses
Section 2	Yes
Section 3	Must cause some problems in life

Don’t go away yet, though. How do you know whether the test was “right”? All tests like this have a built-in rate of being wrong. If you’ll stick with me, I think I can help you understand more about this.

Think about it: they had to have a way of saying who *definitely* “has” bipolar disorder as a way of “testing the test”. If the test says yes, but their “gold standard”, their definite authority – whatever that was – says no, then that means the test is not working perfectly. They tried using 6 yes’s, and 8 yes’s. But the test performed best, compared to their experts’ gold standards, when 7 was used as the official “cut-off”.

You need to know this. When somebody offers you a “test”, which says whether you have some diagnosis or not, this is how it is done. The test is compared to some “gold standard” way of knowing.

You see the problem? In bipolar disorder, we have no gold standard way of knowing! There is no “lab test” that measures some chemical only bipolar people have. (Hopefully, in the next 5 years or so we’ll have something like that.) The “gold standard” used in testing the test you just took was some experts using a list of diagnostic criteria, and talking with the patient for an hour. Not a really great standard, but the best we now have.

What’s the point of all this? You just took a test, and the scoring system says: seven items = “yes”, and less than that = “no”. Just be careful and understand: the test you took is not magic. Even using “7 yes’s” as the cut-off, one person in 10 will be missed that their *gold standard* thought “had bipolar disorder”. Similarly, getting 7 yes answers doesn’t prove you have bipolar disorder, because there can be “false positives” too, with this or any such test (how many positives? That gets pretty complicated).

When you put all this together, I hope you can see that taking a test like this doesn’t offer “the answer”. It is a shorthand version of deciding something that would otherwise take you hours to learn about, e.g. by reading all the material on this site about diagnosis and diagnosis details. You would be well served to do just that reading, and if you do, I hope will have a better understanding by that time of what the test you just took actually means. Good luck.

Dr. Phelps