

Occasionally asked questions (to be continued)

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Are there statistical norms to interpret EssenCES[®] scores?

Please look at the particular document.

Can the questionnaire be used with people with learning disabilities?

When developing the questionnaire, we had in mind patients in forensic institutions who frequently have little education and average or less than average intelligence. Therefore questionnaire items were developed with ease of reading and understanding in mind. However, to perceive and discriminate the dimensions assessed, a minimum of general intelligence and understanding of language appears necessary.

One can try to explain questionnaire items to patients with learning disabilities and assist them in rating the items. There has been some question whether or not the verbal statements of the questionnaire may be replaced by pictorial items. I can hardly imagine that an equivalent version of the questionnaire may be established that way.

How many patients and staff should fill in the questionnaire to obtain an assessment of the ward's climate?

There is no need of all patients or staff filling in the questionnaire. 7 – 10 persons in each group provide a good basis for characterising the ward climate (as the reliability of the instrument is quite good). Sometimes it is argued that the assessment of a ward is only representative and reliable when as many persons as possible contribute to the assessment, and patients or staff are urged to do so. One should keep in mind that assessments might be more realistic and valid when subjects participate spontaneously. So we recommend inviting staff members and patients to fill in the questionnaire and not pushing them.

How to refer to the EssenCES[®] in a publication?

The major non-German references for the questionnaire are currently

Schalast N, Redies M, Collins M, Stacey J, Howells K (2008) EssenCES, a short questionnaire for assessing the social climate of forensic psychiatric wards. Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health, 18(1), 49-58. DOI: 10.1002/cbm.677

Howells K, Tonkin M, Milburn Ch, Lewis J, Draycot S, Cordwell J, Price M, Davies St, Schalast N (2009) The EssenCES measure of social climate: A preliminary validation and normative data in UK high secure hospital settings. Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health, 19(4), 308-320, DOI: 10.1002/cbm.745.

How to score the questionnaire?

Just follow the scoring key belonging to the version of the questionnaire and calculate the sums per subscale. As all subscales have the same number of items and are rated on equal five point scales (0 – 4), the raw scores per subscale range 0 – 20. It doesn't make too much sense to calculate a total score by adding the subscale scores.

How to handle missing values (unrated questionnaire-items)?

Thanks to the fact that the EssenCES[®] is very short, the problem of missing values is not frequent. But what to do when it occurs? The proper way to handle one missing item per subscale would be: calculate the average of the other four answers and add that value to the sum of the other 4. The table below may be helpful to do this.

Sum score of 4 items	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Substitute value for the 5 th item	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.25	1.50	1.75	2.00	2.25	2.50	2.75	3.00	3.25	3.50	3.75	4.00
Total score for the subscale	0.00	1.25	2.50	3.75	5.00	6.25	7.50	8.75	10.00	11.25	12.50	13.75	15.00	16.25	17.50	18.75	20.00

When two items are missing to a subscale, it means that 40 % of the items haven't been assessed. In that case the subscale shouldn't be scored at all.

Is there an EssenCES[®] - Handbook?

A detailed German project report may be downloaded from this site, but an English handbook doesn't exist yet. Temporarily you should refer to the information provided here (and to the papers mentioned before).

The evaluation study run by Kevin Howells, Matt Tonkin et al. (see basic information) will provide an English test manual.