Occasionally asked questions (to be continued)

Can the questionnaire be used with people with learning disabilities?

When developing the questionnaire, we had in mind patients in forensic institutions who fre-
quently have little education and average or less than average intelligence. Therefore ques-
tionnaire items were developed with ease of reading and understanding in mind. However, to per-
ceive and discriminate the dimensions assessed, a minimum of general intelligence and un-
derstanding 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 ver-
sion 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?

Any researcher or practitioner will try to include many patients, clients, inmates or staff to par-
ticipate in an evaluation or survey. This makes sense, as non-participation may bias the a-
 appraisal of a ward or institution, in particular if discontented persons do not share their view.

Nonetheless, 8 – 10 persons in a group generally provide a rather good basis for characterising the ward climate. Patients or staff should not be urged to participate. Assessments might be more realistic and valid when subjects participate spontaneously. 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:

ing the social climate of forensic psychiatric wards. Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health, 18(1), 49-58.


metric properties and construct validity of the English Essen Climate Evaluation Schema (EssenCES) so-

Schalast N, Tonkin M. (2016) The Essen Climate Evaluation Schema EssenCES. Göttingen, Boston, To-
ronto: Hogrefe Publishing.

How to score the questionnaire?

Please find a complete guideline in the EssenCES Manual.

Use the scoring key belonging to the version of the questionnaire and calculate sums per sub-
 scale. Forms in the manual and on this website help to display findings, tables in de manual help to appraise them.

We do not encourage using EssenCES total scores in evaluations.

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

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

Is there an EssenCES© - Handbook?

Please find information about the EssenCES-Manual on the website of Hogrefe Publishing.
A detailed German project report may be downloaded from this website.