



ECHO

Environmental influences
on Child Health Outcomes

A program supported by the NIH

Study Summary

Creating a Common Way to Score Adult Depression

Author(s): Courtney K. Blackwell, Xiaodan Tang, Amy J. Elliott, Tracy Thomes, Hannah Louwagie, Richard Gershon, Benjamin D. Schalet, David Cella

Who sponsored this study?

This research was supported by the Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) program, Office of The Director, National Institutes of Health, with co-funding from the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR).

Why was this study needed?

Depression affects more than 17 million adults in the U.S. each year, and women are at higher risk for depression, particularly during and after pregnancy. Regular screening of adults for symptoms of depression is important for early intervention. Different surveys are used to track depression symptoms in adults, including ones specific to women during and after pregnancy. However, researchers need a uniform set survey measures to track depression over a long time and to conduct nationwide research on depression. This study tried to unify two popular depression surveys: the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), which is used during and after pregnancy; and the Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System Depression (PROMIS-D), which is used at any time in adulthood.

Who was involved?

Around 1,200 mothers from two study sites in the Northern Plains of the United States completed the EPDS and PROMIS-D surveys. Most of the participants were around 35 years old and white, but this sample also included American Indian/Alaska Natives. About half of the participants had a 4-year college degree or higher.

What happened during the study?

The participants filled out the EPDS and PROMIS-D. Researchers collected data and demographics using an online survey.

What were the study results?

The EPDS and PROMIS-D both ask about increased sadness and decreased interest in daily activities. While the EPDS has additional content related to anxiety and suicidal ideation, the results of the two surveys were strongly linked. The researchers were able convert scores from the EPDS to PROMIS-D scores. The scoring conversion worked for different ages, ethnicities, races, and study sites.



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Footnote: Results reported here are for a single study. Other or future studies may provide new information or different results. You should not make changes to your health without first consulting your healthcare professional.

Impact

Adults are encouraged to get regular depression screenings. The EPDS survey is often used to detect depression in women during and after pregnancy. Doctors who want to continue long-term screening for women after pregnancy may want to convert EPDS scores into more general PROMIS-D scores for consistent tracking. Within ECHO, depression research spanning more than one cohort may need to convert between the EPDS and PROMIS-D surveys to combine data from multiple sites.

What happens next?

The survey conversion table made through this study may be useful for doctors and researchers interested in tracking depression symptoms over time. New studies may seek to confirm the link between EPDS and PROMIS-D using bigger, more diverse groups. Studies may also look at linking other depression surveys with the PROMIS-D for easier, more unified tracking of depression.

Where can I learn more?

The conversion table is available at prosettastone.org.

Access the [journal abstract](#), titled, “Developing a common metric for depression across adulthood: Linking PROMIS Depression with the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale,” in *Psychological Assessment*.

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