

Basic Certificate in Palliative Care
Dr. Geeta Joshi
Dr. Piyush Gupta
Dr. Col. Yashavant Joshi
International Institute of Distance Learning
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Week-03

Lecture 05: Kessler Psychological Distress Scale

This is week number 3, lecture number 5. In this lecture, I am going to talk about various psychological distress scale. This lecture has been prepared by Dr. Yashwant Joshi and I am the presenter Dr. Geeta Joshi. In palliative care setup many of our patient has psychological distress and it is very necessary to measure how much the distress is, what the level of this distress is.

So that, we can have interval we can intervene at right moment before the things go out of our home hands. There are few very famous psychological distress scales are in practice and we are going to discuss about it.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:10)

**Kessler
Psychological Distress Scale (K10)**

- The **Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)** is designed to measure anxiety and depression through a 10-item questionnaire. Each question pertains to an emotional state and each has a five-level response scale.
- This instrument uses a patient's self-report measure making it a desirable method of assessment because it depends on the clinicians genuine pursuit to collect information about the patient's current condition. The instrument can be self-administered or interviewer-administrated and patient's privacy should be insured when using this instrument.

The Kessler psychological distress scale normally called K-10 because it has got 10 questionnaires. It is it was designed to measure the anxiety and depression through 10 item questionnaires and each question pertain to an emotional state and each has a 5 level response scale.

The instrument uses a patient self-reporting, patient measure does it self-reporting and instrument can be self-administer or interviewer administer and patients privacy should be taken into the account and you should ensure that whenever you are questioning the patient with all these questions, the patient should be given enough privacy. Sometimes patient is not able to express their emotions or distress in presence of other people.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:15)

**Kessler
Psychological Distress Scale (K10)**

Background:

- The K-10 was originally developed in the United States for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) who wished to obtain an accurate estimation of the prevalence of serious mental illness (SMI).

Psychometrics:

- The psychometric properties of the K-10 are discussed in Kessler, Barker, Colpe, et al., (2003) as well as in several newer studies which can be found in the web-links.

This K-10 was originally developed in United State for the substance abuse people. They wanted to know that what is the level of mental illness among these drug abusers and that is how it came into the practice. The psychometric properties of K-10 are discussed in Kessler, Barker, Colpe this one of the research article it has described this how effective this scale is.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:00)

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)

The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) is a simple measure of psychological distress. **The K10 scale involves 10 questions about emotional states each with a five-level response scale.** The measure can be used as a brief screen to identify levels of distress. The tool can be given to patients to complete, or alternatively the questions can be read to the patient by the practitioner. In the context of injury management, the measure can be provided to the patient where recovery is not proceeding as anticipated (for instance, between weeks four and six), and may highlight the need for more regular review, or referral to a specialist health provider such as a psychologist. **Questions three and six do not need to be asked** if the response to the preceding question was 'none of the time'. In such cases questions three and six should receive an automatic score of one.

You can refer this on the web link. So, this Kessler psychological distress scale is a simple measure of psychological distress. It has got a scale which involves 10 questions. The questions are related to emotional state and each with a 5 level of response scale. The measure can be used as a brief screen to identify levels of distress.

So, briefly you can identify whether patient has distress or not and what level of distress patient has. The tool can be given to patients to complete or alternatively questions can be read to the patient by a practitioner. In the context of injury management the measure can be provided to the patient where recovery is not proceeding as anticipated. See suppose your patient is not recovering well then you should try to evaluate its distress or emotional distress by using this K-10 scale. And many highlight the need for more regular review or referral to the specialist health provider such as psychologist by using this scale you can judge the level of the distress and you can refer the patient to psychologist or psychiatrist.

Question 3 and 6 are not to be asked if the previous question shows that none of the time. So, they they are almost interlinked and you can eliminate these 2 questions. In such cases question 3 and 6 should receive an automatic score of 1.

(Refer Slide Time: 04:55)

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)

Please tick the answer that is correct for you:	All of the time (score 5)	Most of the time (score 4)	Some of the time (score 3)	A little of the time (score 2)	None of the time (score 1)
1. In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel tired out for no good reason?					
2. In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel nervous?					
3. In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel so nervous that nothing could calm you down?					
4. In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel hopeless?					
5. In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel restless or fidgety?					

This is the scale showing questions on left hand side, on right hand side the level of measure that is all of the time that score is 5 and then the score reduces on the towards the number 1 where the score is 1. So, all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, a little of the time and none of the time.

And here the question starts with number 1 question. The here they evaluate the psychological state of previous 4 weeks of the patient, patients life. In the past 4 weeks about how often did you feel tired out for no good reason, just without any reason you feel you are tired out, you do not feel like doing anything. In the past 4 weeks about how often did you feel nervous. In the past 4, if previous 2 question has score 1, then no need to ask question 3.

In the past 4 weeks, how often did you feel so nervous that nothing could calm you down. Number 4 question is how often you felt helpless. Number 5 question is how often you feel restless and fidgety.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:25)

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)

Please tick the answer that is correct for you:	All of the time (score 5)	Most of the time (score 4)	Some of the time (score 3)	A little of the time (score 2)	None of the time (score 1)
6. In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel so restless you could not sit still?					
7. In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel depressed?					
8. In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel that everything was an effort?					
9. In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up?					
10. In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel worthless?					

Number 6 question is how often you felt so restless that you could not sit still. Sometimes patient becomes restless and just moving around cannot sit at one place.

In the past 4, 7 number, in the past 4 weeks how often did you feel depressed. Question 8, how often did you feel everything was not worth an effort. Number 9 say ask about how often did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up. And number 10, how often in last 4 weeks how often did you feel worthless.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:25)

Scoring Instructions

- Each item is scored from one 'none of the time' to five 'all of the time'.

Scores of the 10 items are then summed, yielding a minimum score of 10 and a maximum score of 50. **Low scores indicate low levels of psychological distress and high scores indicate high levels of psychological distress.**



So, these are the question and you can have a score against each question and how to interpret.

Each item is scored from none of the time to number 5 all of the time. So, score of the 10 items are then sum up and minimum score is 10 and maximum will be 50. The low score indicates low level of psychological distress and high score indicates higher level of psychological distress which will require intervention or psychologist reference or psychiatrist reference.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:00)

Interpretation of Scores

The 2001 Victorian Population Health Survey adopted a set of cut-off scores that may be used as a guide for screening for psychological distress. These are outlined below:

- K10 Score: Likelihood of having a mental disorder (psychological distress)
- 10 - 19 Likely to be well
- 20 - 24 Likely to have a mild disorder
- 25 - 29 Likely to have a moderate disorder
- 30 - 50 Likely to have a severe disorder

In 2001, Victorian population health survey adopted a set of cut off score that may be used as a guide for screening of for psychological distress and these are given below. If the on K 10 scale if your score is 10 to 19 you are likely to be a well person good okay person.

If the score is 20 to 24 you are having a mild psychological disorder, 25 to 29 score is likely to have a moderate disorder and 30 to 50 likely score the person is likely to have severe disorder.

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REFERENCES

References 1: Kessler RC, Barker PR, Colpe LJ, Epstein JF, Gfroerer JC, Hiripi E, et al. Screening for serious mental illness in the general population. Arch Gen Psychiatry. 2003 Feb;60(2):184-9.

References 2.: Victorian Population Health Survey. Melbourne: Department of Human Services, Victoria; 2001.

These are the references you can check and have more information from these articles.

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Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K 6)

Primary Use / Purpose

- The K-6 is a 6-item inventory rated on a 5 point Likert-type scale. Its a truncated version of the K-10 and its purpose is also to function as a global measure of distress drawing from depressive and anxiety related symptomology. It measures distress over a period of four weeks prior to administration of the test. The K-6 contains several additional questions; however, these are supplementary and are not required for scoring the K-6.

Coming to use of primary use of this K 10 scale, it is a 6 item inventory rated they have devised another scale which is K 6 in that previous scale it was 10 questionnaire. Here it is K 6, 6 items are invented inventory and rated on the 5 point Likert type scale. It is truncated version of the K 10, it is a smaller version of the K 10 and its purpose is also to

function as a global measure of distress drawing from depressive and anxiety related symptomatology.

It measures distress over a period of 4 weeks prior similar to K 10 here also you are evaluating the status of the patient 4 weeks prior the ask administering this scale. The K 6 contains several additional questions. However, these are supplementary and are not required for scoring of scale. Some supplementary questions are also added so that you can get proper meaning of the question which are there in the K 6 scale.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:25)

Distress Thermometer

- **Overview:** Patients with cancer, and their families and carers, may experience a range of psychological symptoms. This distress thermometer is a tool to be used to measure patients' levels of distress, and it has been found that **it was useful in screening patients and identified those who needed help.**
- **Citation:** Ford A et al (2012) A tool to measure levels of psychological distress. *Nursing Times*; 108: online issue.
- **Authors:** Amanda Ford is Macmillan information and support radiographer; Lisa Mann is Macmillan information and support radiographer; both at Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust.

Coming to another thermometer, it is called thermometer like a temperature thermometer here it is a distress thermometer.

It is a very simple and very effective device is used is used in hospital ward where the patients are admitted and where it can be evaluated every day by a nurse or a paramedical staff. Particularly, patients with cancer and their families and carers may experience a range of psychological symptoms. See start right from the diagnosis up to the treatment and recovery of the patient. There are number of stages through which patient and family pass through during the disease trajectory and they are likely to have distress like hearing the diagnosis, hearing the stage of the disease, hearing ineffectiveness of the

chemotherapy, hearing about the recurrence of the disease, hearing about the development of metastasis of the disease primary cancer. So, all such stages patient is likely to have distress and even family.

And this distress thermometer is a tool to be used to measure patients level of distress and it has been found that it was useful in screening patient. This is a screening tool and to identify the patient who needs help means they want psychosocial intervention, they need proper communication and counseling by a trained nurse or physician or psychologist. This is the reference of this distress thermometer you can go through it.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:20)

Why a distress thermometer?

- Quick screening tools involving fewer than five questions have been recommended as a simple method of detecting distress, anxiety or depression in several different types of cancer settings.
- The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (1998) in the US developed the distress thermometer, which has been widely used for people with cancer. Results of the research and evaluation show that:
- People who score four or below are considered to have “expected distress symptoms” and need simple intervention, while those who score above four are considered to have more serious distress symptoms and require more specialist interventions;
- People like the thermometer and it is easy to use. It generally takes about 20 seconds to complete and patients and carers reported that it helped them focus on their true concerns.
- Patients are asked to consider their levels of distress over the last week and score themselves between 0 (no distress) and 10 (extreme distress).

Why distress thermometer? It is a quick screening method tool involving fewer than 5 questions and have been recommended as a simple method of detecting distress anxiety or depression in several different types of cancer setting. This has been used extensively in cancer setting and there are few questions in it.

The National Comprehensive Cancer Network in US developed the distress thermometer in 1998 and which has been widely used for people with cancer and results of the research and evaluation. So, that people who score 4 or below are considered to have expected distress symptoms. So, the score 4 or below is okay normal which is expected a

level of distress and need simple intervention, but the people who score more than 4 they should be referred to psychologist or psychiatrist for a further intervention and counseling. People like the thermometer because it is easy to use the very info practical aspect is it is easy to use it can be used by patient, patient relative, paramedical staff or volunteer anybody. It generally takes about 20 seconds to give answer to the questions given in the given in it and it carers reported that it help them focus on that true concern the each and every problem areas are written in that.

So, patient and carer can identify exactly which area they are talking about. Patient are asked to consider their level of distress over last week. It is not very prior up to 4 weeks where patient may not remember also, but only very short duration previous week how they feel about various situation that is what is asked in the distress thermometer and we will see it in next slide.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:35)

Distress Thermometer

During the past week, how distressed have you been?



Please indicate your level of distress on the thermometer and check the causes of your distress.

<p>Practical problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> Work/school <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Child care <p>Family problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Children <p>Emotional problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Worry <input type="checkbox"/> Sadness <input type="checkbox"/> Depression <input type="checkbox"/> Nervousness <p>Spiritual/religious concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Relating to God <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of faith <input type="checkbox"/> Other problems 	<p>Physical problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pain <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Getting around <input type="checkbox"/> Bathing/dressing <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing <input type="checkbox"/> Mouth sores <input type="checkbox"/> Eating <input type="checkbox"/> Indigestion <input type="checkbox"/> Constipation/diarrhea <input type="checkbox"/> Bowel changes <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in urination <input type="checkbox"/> Fevers <input type="checkbox"/> Skin dry/itchy <input type="checkbox"/> Nose dry/congested <input type="checkbox"/> Tingling in hands/feet <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling swollen <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual problems
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BRIEF SCREENING TOOL AND PROBLEM LIST

So, this is the distress thermometer where the scale is from 0, 0 means no distress and 10 the highest score is 10 which means extreme distress. On right hand side problem areas are listed down like practical problem you have to list yes or no against each problem you have to write yes or no like practical problems like housing problem, insurance problem,

work and school problem, transportation problem, child care problem these are the routine problem a patient or carer will face.

Similarly, family related problem with a spouse or problem with the children or problem with the parents something like that. Then emotional problems too much of worries, too much of sadness, depression, nervousness. Similarly, spiritual concerns angry with the god, loss of faith and other problem then it it it does not evaluate only psychological aspect it evaluates the physical problems also. Here there is a list of symptoms which patient has to tick and say yes or no as well as they have to write the score 4 number or 3 number or 2 number or 8 number like that. So, by this just having a look at it patients attending physician will come to know that this patient has got this many physical problem, this many symptoms and these are the areas where he has a psychosocial problem.

So, this area will be picked up by the psychologist or social worker and they will start their action on it by counseling of the patient, talking to patient and with good communication with the patient and carer. The list of physical problem are almost every list every problem has been symptom has been listed down like pain, nausea, fatigue, sleep that is insomnia, mouth sore these are the common symptoms you will find in a cancer patient. So, distress thermometer is a very effective tool, very practical, easy to use and it is it has advantage that it describes the physical problem as well as psychosocial problem which is faced by cancer patients on day to day life. So, learn these tools put them in practice, you can use any of it in your practice and make it a habit that your each and every team member of your team should learn this to use this thermometer and make documentation as every day. This will help your patient, identify your patient and help them in psychological intervention. Thank you very much.