

The Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale (KADS): How to use the 6-item KADS

The KADS was developed to assist in the public health and clinical identification of young people at risk for depression. It was created by clinicians and researchers expert in the area of adolescent depression and the application of various scales and tools in clinical, research and institutional settings. Work on the KADS was conducted in samples of secondary school students, in clinical settings and in clinical research projects.

There are three different KADS scales: the 6-item, the 11-item and the 16 item. The 16 item is designed for clinical research purposes and is not available on the Sun Life Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health website.

The 11-item KADS has been incorporated into the Chehil-Kutcher Youth Depression Diagnosis and Monitoring Tool. This tool is designed for use in clinical settings in which health providers treat young people who have depression.

Researchers interested in using the KADS can contact the office of the Sun Life Chair at (902) 470- 6598 or Dr. Kutcher directly by email at skutcher@dal.ca.

The 6-item KADS is designed for use in institutional settings (such as schools or primary care settings) where it can be used as a screening tool to identify young people at risk for depression or by trained health care providers (such as public health nurses, primary care physicians) or

educators (such as guidance counselors) to help evaluate young people who are in distress or who have been identified as possibly having a mental health problem.

The tool is a self-report scale and is meant to be completed by the young person following direction from the health provider, educator or other responsible person. The youth should be instructed that this tool will help the person conducting the assessment to better understand what difficulties they might be having and to assist the assessor in determining if the young person may have one of the more common emotional health problems found in adolescents – depression. The young person should be told that depending what the assessment of their problem identifies (the KADS plus the discussion with the assessor) the use of the KADS will help in the determination of next steps.

The KADS is written at approximately a grade six reading level and is useful in assessing young people ages 12 to 22. It has a sensitivity for depression of over 90 percent and a specificity for depression of over 70 percent – putting it into the top rank of self-report depression assessment tools currently available. It is also much shorter than other available tools and unlike many others, is free of charge. It has been recommended for use in a number of expert reports including the National Institute for Clinical Evaluation (UK) and the GLAD-PC Guidelines (USA and Canada). The KADS has been translated into many different languages and is used globally.

KADS Scoring

The KADS is scored using a zero to three system with “hardly ever” scored as a zero and “all of the time” scored as a three. A score of six or greater is consistent with a diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder and should trigger a more comprehensive mental health assessment of the young person. The KADS will also often identify young people who suffer from substantial anxiety such as Panic Disorder and Social Anxiety Disorder but it has not been validated for that specific purpose.

Another use of the KADS is for monitoring of symptoms in the young person being treated for depression. This should ideally be done at each visit and the scores recorded and reviewed for evidence of improvement.

The last item on the KADS is very sensitive to suicide risk. Any young person scoring one or higher on the last item should have a more thorough suicide risk assessment. We suggest that this be conducted using the adolescent suicide risk assessment guide – the TASR – A. A copy of the TASR – A can be accessed on the [clinical tools section of our website](#).

The KADS can be used by expert clinicians (such as child and adolescent mental health staff working in sub-specialty or academic settings) without additional training. Training in the use of the KADS for others is advised and can be arranged for groups of 10 or more by contacting the office of the Chair. Depending on the group, the duration of KADS training ranges from one to three hours.

Permission to use the KADS

The KADS is available freely for use but may not be sold, copied or otherwise distributed without the express written consent of Dr. Stan Kutcher.

We appreciate any feedback on the use, outcome or suitability of the KADS from any individual or group who is using it. Feedback can be directed to Dr. Stan Kutcher by email at skutcher@dal.ca.

Clinicians, educators, youth workers and others interested in other training programs pertaining to youth depression and suicide offered by the Chair can find further information by visiting the [training programs section of our website](#).

More Information

Further information about the KADS can be found in these sources:

Brooks, S. (2004) The Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale (KADS). *Child & Adolescent Psychopharmacology News*, 9, 54, 4-6

Brooks, S.J., & Kutcher, S. (2001). Diagnosis and measurement of adolescent depression: A review of commonly utilized instruments. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology*, 11, 341–376.

Brooks, S.J., Krulewicz, S., & Kutcher, S. (2003). The Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale: Assessment of its evaluative properties over the course of an 8-week pediatric pharmacotherapy trial. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology*, 13, 337–349.

Kutcher, S., Chehil, S. (2006) *Suicide Risk Management: A Manual for Health Professionals*. Wiley-Blackwell.

LeBlanc, J.C., Almudevar, A., Brooks, S.J., & Kutcher, S. (2002). Screening for adolescent depression: comparison of the Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale with the Beck Depression Inventory. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology*, 12, 113–126.

6-ITEM Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale: KADS-6 (Échelle de dépression pour adolescents Kutcher – 6 items)

NOM : _____

NUMÉRO DU DOSSIER : _____

DATE : _____

ÉVALUATION COMPLÉTÉE PAR : _____

EN GÉNÉRAL, PENDANT LA DERNIÈRE SEMAINE, COMMENT TU T'ES SENTI(E) EN TERME DE :

1. Humeur basse, 'down', déprimé(e), pas envie de prendre la peine.

0-Rarement 1-Souvent 2-La plupart du temps 3-Tout le temps

2. Des sentiments d'être sans valeur, sans espoir, de décevoir, de ne pas être une bonne personne.

0-Rarement 1-Souvent 2-La plupart du temps 3-Tout le temps

3. Se sentir fatigué(e), sans énergie, difficilement motivé(e), doit te pousser pour compléter des activités.

0-Rarement 1-Souvent 2-La plupart du temps 3-Tout le temps

4. Sentir que la vie n'est pas agréable, se sentir en mauvaise santé lorsque tu en as pas l'habitude, ne pas avoir autant de plaisir que d'habitude.

0-Rarement 1-Souvent 2-La plupart du temps 3-Tout le temps

5. Se sentir inquiet(e), nerveux(se), affolé(e), tendu(e), angoissé(e) et anxieu(se)x.

0-Rarement 1-Souvent 2-La plupart du temps 3-Tout le temps

6. Avoir des pensées, des plans ou des gestes suicidaires, ou encore de l'automutilation (se blesser intentionnellement).

0-Rarement 1-Souvent 2-La plupart du temps 3-Tout le temps

SCORE TOTAL : _____

APERÇU

L'échelle de dépression pour adolescents Kutcher à 6 items est une échelle d'auto-évaluation conçue spécifiquement pour diagnostiquer la dépression chez l'adolescent et en mesurer la sévérité. L'échelle comprend deux versions : une de 16 items et une abrégée de 6 items.

NOTATION

SCORE TOTAL INTERPRÉTATION

0 - 5	Probablement pas déprimé(e)
6 et plus	Possibilité de dépression; une évaluation plus exhaustive et nécessaire

RÉFÉRENCES

- LeBland JC, Almudevar A, Brooks SJ Kutcher S: Screening for Adolescent Depression: Comparison of the Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale with the Beck Depression Inventory, Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology, 2002 Summer; 12(2):113-26.

La fidélité et la validité des instruments d'auto-évaluation communément utilisés dans l'évaluation de la dépression chez les adolescents sont limitées ou inconnues. Nous décrivons une nouvelle échelle d'auto-évaluation, le Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale - KADS (Échelle de dépression pour adolescents Kutcher). Cette échelle est conçue spécifiquement pour le diagnostic de la dépression chez l'adolescent et en mesurer la sévérité. Ce rapport compare la validité diagnostique de l'échelle complète Kutcher de 16 items, des versions abrégées de l'échelle Kutcher et l'Inventaire de dépression de Beck (IDB) à la Mini-entrevue neuropsychiatrique internationale pour l'évaluation de la dépression majeure. Quelque 309 des 1 712 étudiants de la 7ième à la 12ième année qui ont complété le IDB avaient des scores de plus de 15. Ceux-ci ont été invités à poursuivre l'évaluation. 161 ont accepté de reprendre le IDB et de compléter les échelles de dépression pour adolescents Kutcher et la Mini-entrevue. Une analyse de la courbe des fonctions d'efficacité du récepteur (FER) a été faite afin d'identifier les items qui caractérisent le mieux les jeunes aux prises avec la dépression majeure. Des analyses FER additionnelles ont établi que, globalement, la capacité diagnostique de l'échelle Kutcher de 6 items est aussi efficace que le IDB, et meilleure que l'échelle Kutcher de 16 items. Lorsque l'échelle Kutcher de 6 items est utilisée avec un score limite de 6, elle atteint un taux de sensibilité et de spécificité de 92% et 71% respectivement – une telle combinaison n'est atteinte par aucun autre outil d'auto-évaluation. L'Échelle Kutcher de 6 items pourrait s'avérer un moyen efficace d'éliminer la possibilité du diagnostic de dépression majeure chez les adolescents.