# Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS)

## Assessment Overview

### Assessment Area

**ICF Domain:** Body Function  
**Subcategory:** Mental Functions

### Summary

The Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS) is a well-established self-report screening measure of adult depression severity. It has been used in a variety of mental health areas including primary care, psychiatric, drug trials, and related clinical, institutional, and research settings.

- In some clinical applications the Beck Depression Inventory or the PHQ-9 may be preferable as they survey a two week period and include an item specific to suicidal ideation (this is consistent with DSM-IV criteria for major depression).
- Some items on the Zung SDS may be sensitive to individuals with SCI.
- Easy to administer and score. The positive and negative item wording may be confusing for some individuals.

### Availability

[http://healthnet.umassmed.edu/mhealth/ZungSelfRatedDepressionScale.pdf](http://healthnet.umassmed.edu/mhealth/ZungSelfRatedDepressionScale.pdf)

**Languages:** English, Arabic, Azerbaijani, Dutch, German, Portuguese, and Spanish

## Assessment Interpretability

### Minimal Clinically Important Difference

Not established in SCI

### Statistical Error

Not established in SCI

### Typical Values

**Mean (SD) Scores:**
- Somatic Subscale: 15.4 (4.1)  
- Affective Subscale: 21.2 (6.4)  
- Total Score: 45.7 (11.9)  

(Tate et al. 1993; n=162, 128 male, mixed injury types, outpatients)

**Threshold Values:**
Most individuals in need of treatment have scores between 50 and 69. Scores over 70 are rare.

(Carroll et al., 1973; review)

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**You Will Need**

**Length:**  
< 10 minutes, 20 items  

**Scoring:**  
Half the items are worded positively and half are worded negatively on a 4-point scale. Positive items are reverse-scored. The total score (ranges from 20 to 80) is obtained by summing scores for all individual items. Higher scores indicate increased depressive symptoms.
## Measurement Properties

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<th>Validity</th>
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<td><strong>Moderate</strong> to <strong>High</strong></td>
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### Validity – **Moderate** to **High**

**High** correlation with Medically Based Emotional Distress Scale:
Correlation = 0.71
(Tate et al. 1993; n=162, 128 male, mixed injury types, outpatients)

**Moderate** correlation with the depression subscale of the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI):
Correlation = 0.52
(Overholser et al. 1993; n=81, 63 male, mixed injury types, inpatients and outpatients)

**Number of studies reporting validity data:** 2

### Reliability – **High**

**High** Internal Consistency:
\( \alpha = 0.81 \)
(Tate et al. 1993; n=162, 128 male, mixed injury types, outpatients)

**Number of studies reporting reliability data:** 1

### Responsiveness

**Floor/Ceiling Effect:**
Not established in SCI

**Effect Size:**
Not established in SCI

**Number of studies reporting responsiveness data:** 0