Fatigue Severity Scale (FSS)

Assessment Overview

Assessment Area

ICF Domain:
Body Function
Subcategory:
Mental Function

You Will Need

Length:
Approximately 5 minutes to complete 9 items.
Scoring:
Participants choose the level of agreement for each question, from 1 (strongly disagree to 7 (strongly agree).
Ratings are based on their experience of fatigue over the past seven days.
Sum the score from each item to get a total score.

Summary

The Fatigue Severity Scale (FSS) was originally developed for use among people with Multiple Sclerosis, and it captures the individual's experience of mental or psychological fatigue and how it interferes with performing certain activities (exercise, work and family life).

Availability

Worksheet: Can be found here.

Assessment Interpretability

Minimal Clinically Important Difference

MDC for total FSS = 1.55
(Anton et al. 2008; n=48; 31 males; motor complete SCI; tertiary care)

Pooled MCID for total FSS = 1.1
(Sobreira et al. 2021; n=57; 36 males; mean (SD) age: 54.5 (15.9) years; mean (SD) time since injury: 5.5 (1.47) months)

Statistical Error

SEM = 0.56
(Anton et al. 2008; n=48; 31 males; motor complete SCI; tertiary care)

Typical Values

Total Mean (SD) FSS Score = 4.4 (1.4)
(Anton et al. 2008; n=48; 31 males; motor complete SCI; tertiary care)

Assuming a FSS cut-score of 4 to indicate significant fatigue:
Sensitivity = 75%
Specificity = 67%
(Anton et al. 2008; n=48; 31 males; motor complete SCI; tertiary care)

Measurement Properties

Validity – Low to High

Moderate ROC Analysis:

Area under the curve = 0.799

(Anton et al. 2008; n=48; 31 males; motor complete SCI; tertiary care)

Moderate correlation with the Visual Analogue Scale for Fatigue:

r = 0.74

(Sobreira et al. 2021; n=57; 36 males; mean (SD) age: 54.5 (15.9) years; mean (SD) time since injury: 5.5 (1.47) months)

Not Ranked

Odds Ratio (95% CI) = 1.69 (1.09-2.29)

$X^2 = 3.23$; p-value = 0.07

(Craig et al. 2015; n=88 (62 males, 26 females); mean age (SD): 42.6 (17.8) years; 39% Tetraplegia, 61% Paraplegia)

Number of studies reporting validity data: 4

Reliability – High

High Test-retest Reliability (2 weeks):

Total ICC = 0.84 (95% CI = 0.74–0.90)

Items ICC ranged from 0.32-0.77

(Anton et al. 2008; n=48; 31 males; motor complete SCI; tertiary care)

High Internal Consistency:

Cronbach's α = 0.88-0.96

(Anton et al. 2008; n=48; 31 males; motor complete SCI; tertiary care)

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