

Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC)



The PSC measures possible psychosocial challenges in children. Respondents are asked to rate how well each of 35 statements describes their child. We report an overall summary result and results for three subscales. Higher scores indicate worse psychosocial functioning. The score for your child is compared with the population from the development study. We recommend you complete the questionnaire every 3 months.

Focus

The PSC focuses on overall psychosocial functioning and three subscales (attention problems, internalizing problems and externalizing problems).²

Overall Psychosocial Functioning

Psychosocial health has been described as a state of mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. This definition and basic traits below are repeated from Study.com.³

Individuals who are deemed to be psychosocially healthy aren't completely devoid of problems. It is the way people view themselves and how they deal with stressful situations that sets psychosocially healthier people from those who are less healthy.

Here are just a few example traits shared by these healthier individuals. They:

- Like themselves
- Accept their mistakes
- Take care of themselves
- Have empathy for others
- Control their anger, hate, tension, and anxiety
- Are optimistic
- Can work alone and with others equally well

At a glance

The Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC) is a brief screening questionnaire that is used by pediatricians and other health professionals to improve the recognition and treatment of psychosocial problems in children.

Found in

MyFampal Parent

Source

Jellinek, Murphy (1988)¹

Abbreviation

PSC

Category

Know your child

For children and adolescents aged 3 to 17 years

Answered by parent

Structure & Focus

35 questions

Summary score. Subscale scores for attention problems, internalizing problems and externalizing problems.

Frequency

Every 3 months

Credibility

★★★★★



The PSC does not make a clinical diagnosis. No test is 100% accurate and data from past studies using the PSC indicate that 2 out of 3 children whose results show as positive (high risk) on the PSC will be correctly identified as having impairment in psychosocial functioning. Conversely, approximately 1 out of 20 children whose results fall outside this threshold may actually have some psychosocial impairment. The inevitability

Internalizing Problems

The PSC Internalizing Problems subscale helps parents identify the potential for a child to be experiencing anxiety or depression. As with the overall Psychosocial Functioning result, the PSC does not make a clinical diagnosis. We recommend that you consult an expert if you are concerned by this result.



of both 'false positive' and 'false negative' outcomes underscores the importance of expert judgment in interpreting PSC scores.

Attention Problems

The PSC Attention Problems subscale helps parents identify potential difficulties with a child's attention and concentration. As with the overall Psychosocial Functioning result, the PSC does not make a clinical diagnosis. We recommend that you consult an expert if you are concerned by this result.

Externalizing Problems

The PSC Externalizing Problems subscale helps parents identify the potential for a child to be experiencing disruptive, impulse control or conduct problems. As with all PSC results, the questionnaire does not make a clinical diagnosis. We recommend that you consult an expert if you are concerned by this result.



Strengths and limitations

Pros:

- The PSC is simple to complete and validated for parent use
- Subscales provide useful additional insights

Cons:

- The development sample studied were all in the U.S. and were predominantly male and Caucasian
- The range of PSC responses in a population are not normally distributed and we use lognormal transformation to estimate the distribution
- We failed to identify any published data on the distribution of subscale results. We assume subscale scores follow an exponential cumulative distribution function with λ set such that population at the subscale cut-off score equals the population at the age and sex matched cut-off overall psychosocial functioning score

Comparator information

The result for an individual child is compared with results from a U.S. study conducted in 1999.⁴ The study used the PSC to screen for psychosocial problems in pediatric primary care. An individual overall result for a child is compared with the responses distributed within this population. Note that insufficient published information was identified to produce as accurate subscale comparisons.

We assume that subscale scores follow an exponential cumulative distribution function with λ set such that population at the subscale cut-off score equals the population at the age and sex matched cut-off overall psychosocial functioning result. As we collect more information on PSC responses from our MyFampal families we will improve these comparisons.

References

- 1 Jellinek MS, Murphy JM, Robinson J, Feins A, Lamb S, Fenton T. Pediatric Symptom Checklist: Screening school-age children for psychosocial dysfunction. *J Pediatr* 1988; **112**: 201–9.
- 2 Pediatric Symptom Checklist - Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA. http://www.massgeneral.org/psychiatry/services/psc_scoring.aspx (accessed July 6, 2016).
- 3 What Is Psychosocial Health? - Definition, Components & Traits - Video & Lesson Transcript. Study.com. <http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-psychosocial-health-definition-components-traits.html> (accessed July 19, 2016).
- 4 Jellinek MS, Murphy J, Little M, Pagano ME, Comer DM, Kelleher KJ. Use of the pediatric symptom checklist to screen for psychosocial problems in pediatric primary care: A national feasibility study. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 1999; **153**: 254–60.

For more information

www.myfampal.com

© 2016 Ablescent Limited. All rights reserved.

MyFampal is a trading name of Ablescent Ltd and Ablescent LLC. Ablescent Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales. Registered number: 09594153. Registered office: Future Business Centre, King's Hedges Road, Cambridge, CB4 2HY, UK. Ablescent LLC is a company registered in Delaware, USA. File Number: 5786246. Mailing Address: MyFampal, P.O. Box 347, Stockton, NJ 08559-0347, USA.