Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS)

*The wording of the items can be adapted to cover different types of drugs by modification of the reference to the named drug.[2] Below is the generic version of the Severity of Dependence Scale.*

Please tick (✔) one box for each question

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Q1. | Did you think your use of [named drug] was out of control? | Never or almost neverSometimesOftenAlways | ⬜ 0⬜ 1⬜ 2⬜ 3 |
| Q2. | Did the prospect of missing a fix (or dose) or not chasing make you anxious or worried? | Never or almost neverSometimesOftenAlways | ⬜ 0⬜ 1⬜ 2⬜ 3 |
| Q3. | Did you worry about your use of [named drug]? | Never or almost neverSometimesOftenAlways | ⬜ 0⬜ 1⬜ 2⬜ 3 |
| Q4. | Did you wish you could stop? | Never or almost neverSometimesOftenAlways | ⬜ 0⬜ 1⬜ 2⬜ 3 |
| Q5. | How difficult would you find it to stop or go without [named drug]? | Not difficultQuite difficultVery difficultImpossible | ⬜ 0⬜ 1⬜ 2⬜ 3 |
| **Total Score** |  |

##

**Scoring and interpretation**: The five item SDS can be administered to screen for problem/risky use of a number of substances. Each question is scored either 0,1,2, or 3. A total score is calculated by summing the responses to all five questions.  The minimum total score possible is 0, and the maximum total score possible is 15 (i.e. total score range: 0-15). A higher total score indicates a higher level of dependence. See below for cut-offs for various drugs.

**Cut-off SDS scores for various drugs of concern**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Drug of Concern** | **Cut-off** | **Reference** |
| Alcohol | 3 or more | Lawrinson, et al., 2007 |
| Amphetamine | 5 or more | Topp & Mattick, 1997 |
| Analgesics | 5 or more | Grande, et al., 2009 |
| Benzodiazepine | 7 or more | De Las Cuevas, et al., 2000 |
| Cannabis | 3 or more | Swift, Copeland & Hall, 1998 |
| Cocaine | 3 or more | Kaye & Darke, 2002 |
| Ecstasy | 4 or more | Bruno, et al., 2009 |
| Heroin | 5 or more | Gossop et al., 1995 |

**Tool citation**: Gossop, M., Darke, S., Griffiths, P., et al. The Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS): psychometric properties of the SDS in English and Australian samples of heroin, cocaine and amphetamine users*.* *Addiction*, 1995. **90**(5): 607-614.

## Score references:

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* De Las Cuevas, C., Sanz, E.J., Padilla, J., and Berenguer, J.C. *The Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS) as screening test for benzodiazepine dependence: SDS validation study.* Addiction, 2000. **95**(2): 245-250.
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## Further information: Fischer, J.A., Roche, A.M., and Duraisingam, V. *Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS): description, strengths and knowledge gaps*. 2021, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA), Flinders University: Adelaide, South Australia.