The Trauma Screening Questionnaire (TSQ)

Directions for Use

Description
The Trauma Screening Questionnaire (TSQ: Brewin et al. 2002) is a self-report measure of responses to a traumatic event. It consists of 10 questions measuring re-experiencing and arousal symptoms adapted from the Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Symptom Scale (PSS-SR; Foa et al. 1993). It is designed for use a month or more following exposure to a traumatic event to identify individuals who are likely to be currently suffering from PTSD.

Administration
The TSQ is a self-report questionnaire and takes only a few minutes to complete. Instructions are given at the top of the questionnaire.

Scoring
Scoring is straightforward. The 10 questions require a yes or no answer. Six or more positive responses mean that the client is at risk of having PTSD according to the DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) and requires a more detailed assessment.
Interpretation

The time frame of the scale is a month or more following exposure to a traumatic event – it is not designed to be used before that time. It assesses current symptoms. It does not diagnose Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Its use is recommended in acute settings e.g. liaison services, primary care. It is based on research conducted in the south east of England.

Psychometric Details

Evaluation

The TSQ was originally administered to forty-one train crash survivors, all of whom were interviewed one week later with a structured diagnostic interview for PTSD, the Clinician Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS: Blake et al. 1995). The rate of PTSD in this sample was 34%. Using a cutoff of 6 or more positive responses the TSQ performed as follows: sensitivity .86, specificity .93, positive predictive power .86, negative predictive power .93, overall efficiency .90. In a replication sample of 157 victims of violent crime, where the rate of PTSD as determined by a questionnaire was 26.8%, the TSQ performed as follows: sensitivity .76, specificity .97, positive predictive power .91, negative predictive power .92, overall efficiency .92. Further details can be found in Brewin et al. (2002).

Comparison

While there are now many questionnaires designed to assess PTSD symptoms that could be employed for screening purposes (see Brewin, Rose & Andrews, in press, for a review), the TSQ is possibly the simplest and shortest self-report measure currently available. The performance of the TSQ is as good if not better than other available instruments and has been found to be equivalent to that obtained from the comparison of diagnoses yielded by the two most highly regarded interview assessments currently available for PTSD: the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV (SCID, First et al. 1996) PTSD module and the CAPS.

There appear to be two main limitations. Firstly, the TSQ was not designed to assess multiple or very extended trauma and may underestimate the effects of this. Secondly, interpretation of the findings should be cautious while its use is explored further with populations differing in type of trauma and in base rates of PTSD.

For further information contact:

Berkshire Traumatic Stress Service
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Erleigh Road Clinic
25 Erleigh Road
Reading, Berks
RG1 5LR

Tel: 0118 929 6400
Fax: 0118 926 3942
Email: suzanne.rose@berkshire.nhs.uk
References


# The Traumatic Screening Questionnaire (TSQ)


---

## Your Own Reactions Now to the Traumatic Event

Please consider the following reactions which sometimes occur after a traumatic event. This questionnaire is concerned with your personal reactions to the traumatic event which happened a few weeks ago. Please indicate whether or not you have experienced any of the following AT LEAST TWICE IN THE PAST WEEK:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES, AT LEAST TWICE IN THE PAST WEEK</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Upsetting thoughts or memories about the event that have come into your mind against your will</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Upsetting dreams about the event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Acting or feeling as though the event were happening again</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Feeling upset by reminders of the event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bodily reactions (such as fast heartbeat, stomach churning, sweating, dizziness) when reminded of the event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Difficulty falling or staying asleep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Irritability or outbursts of anger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Difficulty concentrating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Heightened awareness of potential dangers to yourself and others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Being jumpy or being startled at something unexpected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>