

Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Children and Adolescents (HoNOSCA)

Glossary for HoNOSCA score sheet*

S. G. GOWERS, R. C. HARRINGTON, A. WHITTON, A. BEEVOR, P. LELLIOTT,
R. JEZZARD and J. K. WING

Summary of rating instructions:

- Rate each scale in order from 1 to 13 followed by the additional Scales 14-15 if required.
- Do not include information rated in an earlier item.
- Rate the MOST SEVERE problem that occurred during the period rated.
- All scales follow the format:
 - 0=no problem;
 - 1=minor problem requiring no action;
 - 2=mild problem but definitely present;
 - 3=moderately severe problem;
 - 4=severe to very severe problem.

Rate 9 if not known

SECTION A

1. Problems with disruptive, antisocial or aggressive behaviour

Include behaviour associated with any disorder, such as hyperkinetic disorder, depression, autism, drugs or alcohol.

Include physical or verbal aggression (e.g. pushing, hitting, vandalism, teasing), or physical or sexual abuse of other children.

Include antisocial behaviour (e.g. thieving, lying, cheating) or oppositional behaviour (e.g. defiance, opposition to authority or tantrums).

Do not include overactivity rated at Scale 2. Truancy, rated at Scale 13, self-harm rated at Scale 3.

0=No problems of this kind during the period rated.

1=Minor quarrelling, demanding behaviour, undue irritability, lying etc.

2=Mild but definitely disruptive or antisocial behaviour, lesser damage to property or aggression, or defiant behaviour.

3=Moderately severe aggressive or anti-social behaviour such as fighting or persistently threatening or very oppositional or more serious destruction to property or moderate delinquent acts.

4=Disruptive in almost all activities, or at least one serious physical attack on others or animals, or serious destruction to property.

2. Problems with overactivity, attention or concentration

Include overactive behaviour associated with any cause such as hyperkinetic disorder, mania or arising from drugs.

Include problems with restlessness, fidgeting, inattention or concentration due to any cause, including depression.

0=No problems of this kind during the period rated.

1=Slight overactivity or minor restlessness etc.

2=Mild but definite overactivity and/or attentional problems, but these can usually be controlled.

3=Moderately severe overactivity and/or attentional problems that are sometimes uncontrollable.

4=Severe overactivity and/or attentional problems that are present in most activities and almost never controllable.

3. Non-accidental self-injury

Include self-harm such as hitting self and self-cutting, suicide attempts, overdoses, hanging, drowning etc.

Do not include scratching, picking as a direct result of a physical illness rated at Scale 6.

Do not include accidental self-injury due e.g. to severe learning or physical disability, rated at Scale 6. Illness or injury as a direct consequence of drug/alcohol use, rated at Scale 6.

0=No problem of this kind during the period rated.

1=Occasional thoughts about death, or of self-harm not leading to injury. No self-harm or suicidal thoughts.

2=Non-hazardous self-harm, such as wrist-scratching, whether or not associated with suicidal thoughts.

3=Moderately severe suicidal intent (including preparatory acts e.g. collecting tablets) or moderate non-hazardous self-harm (e.g. small overdose).

4=Serious suicidal attempt (e.g. serious overdose) or serious deliberate self-injury.

4. Problems with alcohol, substance/solvent misuse

Include problems with alcohol substance/solvent misuse taking into account current age and societal norms.

Do not include aggressive/disruptive behaviour due to alcohol or drug use, rated at Scale 1. Physical illness or disability due to alcohol or drug use, rated at Scale 6.

0=No problems of this kind during the period rated.

1=Minor alcohol or drug use, within age norms.

2=Mildly excessive alcohol or drug use.

3=Moderately severe drug or alcohol problems significantly out of keeping with age norms.

4=Severe drug or alcohol problems leading to dependency or incapacity.

5. Problems with scholastic or language skills

Include problems in reading, spelling, arithmetic, speech or language associated with any disorder or problem, such as a specific developmental learning problem, or physical disability such as hearing problem.

Children with generalised learning disability should not be included unless their functioning is below the expected level.

Include reduced scholastic performance associated with emotional or behavioural problems.

Do not include temporary problems resulting purely from inadequate education.

0=No problems of this kind during the period rated.

1=Minor impairment within the normal range of variation.

*HoNOSCA glossary and score sheet protected by Crown copyright and may be copied freely.

2=Mild but definite impairment of clinical significance.

3=Moderately severe problems, below the level expected on the basis of mental age, past performance or physical disability.

4=Severe impairment much below the level expected on the basis of mental age, past performance or physical disability.

6. Physical illness or disability problems

Include physical illness or disability problems that limit or prevent movement, impair sight or hearing, or otherwise interfere with personal functioning.

Include movement disorder, side-effects from medication, physical effects from drug/alcohol use, or physical complications of psychological disorders such as severe weight loss.

Include self-injury due to severe learning or physical disability or as a consequence of self-injury such as head-banging.

Do not include somatic complaints with no organic basis, rated at Scale 8.

0=No incapacity as a result of a physical health problem during the period rated.

1=Slight incapacity as a result of a health problem during the period (e.g. cold, non-serious fall etc.).

2=Physical health problem that imposes mild but definite functional restriction.

3=Moderate degree of restriction on activity due to a physical health problem.

4=Complete or severe incapacity due to physical health problems.

7. Problems associated with hallucinations, delusions or abnormal perceptions

Include hallucinations, delusions or abnormal perceptions irrespective of diagnosis.

Include odd and bizarre behaviour associated with hallucinations and delusions.

Include problems with other abnormal perceptions such as illusions or pseudo-hallucinations, or overvalued ideas such as distorted body image, suspicious or paranoid thoughts.

Do not include disruptive or aggressive behaviour associated with hallucinations or

delusions, rated at Scale 1. Overactive behaviour associated with hallucinations or delusions, rated at Scale 2.

0=No evidence of abnormal thoughts or perceptions during the period rated.

1=Somewhat odd or eccentric beliefs not in keeping with cultural norms.

2=Abnormal thoughts or perceptions are present (e.g. paranoid ideas, illusions or body image disturbance), but there is little distress or manifestation in bizarre behaviour, i.e. clinically present but mild.

3=Moderate preoccupation with abnormal thoughts or perceptions or delusions; hallucinations, causing much distress and/or manifested in obviously bizarre behaviour.

4=Mental state and behaviour is seriously and adversely affected by delusions or hallucinations or abnormal perceptions, with severe impact on child/adolescent or others.

8. Problems with non-organic somatic symptoms

Include problems with gastrointestinal symptoms such as non-organic vomiting or cardiovascular symptoms or neurological symptoms or non-organic enuresis or encopresis or sleep problems or chronic fatigue.

Do not include movement disorders such as tics, rated at Scale 6; physical illnesses that complicate non-organic somatic symptoms, rated at Scale 6.

0=No problems of this kind during the period rated.

1=Slight problems only; such as occasional enuresis, minor sleep problems, headaches or stomach aches without organic basis.

2=Mild but definite problem with non-organic somatic symptoms.

3=Moderately severe, symptoms produce a moderate degree of restriction in some activities.

4=Very severe or symptoms persist into most activities. The child is seriously or adversely affected.

9. Problems with emotional and related symptoms

Rate only the most severe clinical problem not considered previously.

Include depression, anxiety, worries, fears, phobias, obsessions or compulsions, arising from any clinical condition including eating disorders.

Do not include aggressive, destructive or overactive behaviours attributed to fears, phobias, rated at Scale 1.

Do not include physical complications of psychological disorders, such as severe weight loss, rated at Scale 6.

0=No evidence of depression, anxieties, fears or phobias during the period rated.

1=Mildly anxious; gloomy; or transient mood changes.

2=A mild but definite emotional symptom is clinically present, but is not preoccupying.

3=Moderately severe emotional symptoms, which are preoccupying, intrude into some activities and are uncontrollable at least sometimes.

4=Severe emotional symptoms which intrude into all activities and are nearly always uncontrollable.

10. Problems with peer relationships

Include problems with school mates and social network. Problems associated with active or passive withdrawal from social relationships or problems with over-intrusiveness or problems with the ability to form satisfying peer relationships.

Include social rejection as a result of aggressive behaviour or bullying.

Do not include aggressive behaviour, bullying rated at Scale 1; problems with family or siblings rated at Scale 12.

0=No significant problems during the period rated.

1=Either transient or slight problems, occasional social withdrawal.

2=Mild but definite problems in making or sustaining peer relationships. Problems causing distress due to social withdrawal, over-intrusiveness, rejection or being bullied.

3=Moderate problems due to active or passive withdrawal from social relationships, over-intrusiveness and/or to relationships that provide little or no comfort or support: e.g. as a result of being severely bullied.

4=Severe social isolation with no friends due to inability to communicate socially and/or withdrawal from social relationships.

II. Problems with self-care and independence

Rate the overall level of functioning: e.g. problems with basic activities of self-care such as feeding, washing, dressing, toileting, also complex skills such as managing money, travelling independently, shopping etc., taking into account the norm for the child's chronological age.

Include poor levels of functioning arising from lack of motivation, mood or any other disorder.

Do not include lack of opportunities for exercising intact abilities and skills, as might occur in an over-restrictive family, rated at Scale 12; enuresis and encopresis rated at Scale 8.

0=No problems during the period rated; good ability to function in all areas.

1=Minor problems only; e.g. untidy, disorganised.

2=Self-care adequate, but definite inability to perform one or more complex skills (see above).

3=Major problems in one or more areas of self-care (eating, washing, dressing) or inability to perform several complex skills.

4=Severe disability in all or nearly all areas of self-care and/or complex skills.

12. Problems with family life and relationships

Include parent-child and sibling relationship problems.

Include relationships with foster parents, social workers/teachers in residential placements. Relationships in the home and with separated parents/siblings should both be included. Parental personality problems, mental illness, marital difficulties should only be rated here if they have an effect on the child.

Include problems with emotional abuse such as poor communication, arguments, verbal or physical hostility, criticism and denigration, parental neglect/rejection, over-restriction, sexual and/or physical abuse.

Include sibling jealousy, physical or coercive sexual abuse by a sibling.

Include problems with enmeshment and overprotection.

Include problems associated with family bereavement leading to reorganisation.

Do not include aggressive behaviour by child, rated at Scale 1.

0=No problems during the period rated.

1=Slight or transient problems.

2=Mild but definite problem e.g. some episodes of neglect or hostility or enmeshment or overprotection.

3=Moderate problems e.g. neglect, abuse, hostility. Problems associated with family/carer breakdown or reorganisation.

4=Serious problems with child feeling or being victimised, abused or seriously neglected by family or carer.

13. Poor school attendance

Include truancy, school refusal, school withdrawal or suspension for any cause.

Include attendance at type of school at the time of rating e.g. hospital school, home tuition etc.

If school holiday, rate the last two weeks of the previous term.

0=No problems of this kind during the period rated.

1=Slight problems, e.g. late for two or more lessons.

2=Definite but mild problems, e.g. missed several lessons because of truancy or refusal to go to school.

3=Marked problems, absent several days during the period rated.

4=Severe problems, absent most or all days. Any school suspension, exclusion or expulsion for any cause during the period rated.

SECTION B

Scales 14 and 15 are concerned with problems for the child, parent or carer relating to lack of information or access to services. These are not direct measures of the child's mental health but changes here may result in long-term benefits for the child.

14. Problems with knowledge or understanding about the nature of the child's/adolescent's difficulties (in the previous two weeks)

Include lack of useful information or understanding available to the child/adolescent, parents or carers.

Include lack of explanation about the diagnosis or the cause of the problem or the prognosis.

0=No problems during the period rated. Parents/carers have been adequately informed about the child's problems.

1=Slight problems only.

2=Mild but definite problem.

3=Moderately severe problems. Parents/carers have very little or incorrect knowledge about the problem which is causing difficulties such as confusion or self-blame.

4=Very severe problem. Parents have no understanding about the nature of their child's problems.

15. Problems with lack of information about services or management of the child's/adolescent's difficulties

Include lack of useful information available to the child/adolescent, parents or carers or referrers.

Include lack of information about the most appropriate way of providing services to the child such as care arrangements or educational placements or respite care or statementing.

0=No problems during the period rated. The need for all necessary services has been recognised.

1=Slight problems only.

2=Mild but definite problem.

3=Moderately severe problems. Parents/carers have been given little information about appropriate services or professionals are not sure where a child should be managed.

4=Very severe problem. Parents have no information about appropriate services or professionals do not know where a child should be managed.

APPENDIX

HoNOSCA Score Sheet

Scale 0-4

Rate 9 if not known

Section A

1. Disruptive, antisocial or aggressive behaviour
2. Overactivity attention and concentration
3. Non-accidental self-injury
4. Alcohol, substance/solvent misuse
5. Scholastic or language skills
6. Physical illness or disability problems
7. Hallucinations and delusions
8. Non-organic somatic symptoms
9. Emotional and related symptoms
10. Peer relationships

11. Self-care and independence
 12. Family life and relationships
 13. Poor school attendance

Section A total score**Section B**

14. Lack of knowledge – nature of difficulties
 15. Lack of information – services/management

Section A & B total score

- SIMON G. GOWERS, FRCPsych, University of Liverpool, Section of Adolescent Psychiatry, Pine Lodge Young People's Centre, Chester; RICHARD C. HARRINGTON, FRCPsych, ANNA WHITTON, BSc, University of Manchester, Section of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Manchester; PAUL LELLIOT, FRCPsych, ANNE BEEVOR, BSc, JOHN WING, FRCPsych, Royal College of Psychiatrists' Research Unit, London; ROBERT JEZZARD, FRCPsych, Department of Health, London

Correspondence: Professor S. G. Gowers, University of Liverpool, Section of Adolescent Psychiatry, Academic Unit, Pine Lodge Young People's Centre, 79 Liverpool Road, Chester CH2 1AW

(First received 8 February 1999, final revision 8 February 1999, accepted 8 February 1999)
