Measuring depression in offender populations. Is the Beck Depression Inventory any good?

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What follows

- Systematic review of screening for depression
  - (Hewitt et al., 2009, under review, Journal of Forensic Psychology & Psychiatry)

- An example of the Beck Depression Inventory with offenders
  - (Perry & Gilbody, in press, Journal of Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology)

- Implications for future use

“Looks like it could be depression.”
Depression in offender populations

- High prevalence of depression and general mental illness

- Linked to suicide and self-harm behaviour

- Generally an at risk population
  - (Shaw et al., 2004, *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 184, 263-267.)
### Screening and Risk Assessment Procedures in Prisons

- Lack of validation evidence

- Difficult to identify those most in need

- Use of the BDI-II in prisoner populations
  - (e.g., Boothby & Durham, 1999, *Criminal Justice Behaviour*, 26, 107-124).

### The Beck Depression Inventory

- Originally developed in the 1960s
- Consists of 21 items (rated 0-3)

- Minimal depression (0-13)
- Mild depression (14-19)
- Moderate depression (20-28)
- Severe depression (29-63)

(Beck et al., 1961, *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 4, 561-571.)
Unanswered Questions...

- What do other studies tell us about the BDI-II in prisoner populations?

- Does the BDI-II make a valued contribution towards the identification of depression in prisoner populations?

The methodology: Stage One

- Literature searches
  - (articles between 1806-2009, 5 databases searched)

- Pre-screening (two reviewers)

- Development of inclusion/exclusion criteria

- Data extraction and synthesis

(Hewitt et al., 2009 under review, submitted Journal of Forensic Psychology & Psychiatry)
Stage one: The systematic review.

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The Findings: Stage One

- Boothby 1990
- Chiles 1979
- Domalanta 2003
- Eidhin 2002 control group
- Eidhin 2002 ideator group
- Eidhin 2002 parasuicide
- Malmquist 1990
- Palmer 2005 control group
- Palmer 2005 history
- Palmer 2005
- Perry 2005 DSH group
- Perry 2005 history
- Perry 2005 suicide group
- Scott 1982
- Suris 2001
- Williams 2006

Mean BDI
Some demographical differences

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<th>Factor</th>
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<td>22.3</td>
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The Methodology: Stage two

- Cross sectional study

- Purposive sample

- Completion of the Beck Depression Inventory

Conclusions and Implications

- Use of the BDI-II in offender populations can generate a wide range of scores
- Scores are affected by the demographics of the population
- Concerns about number of false positives
Conclusions and Implications

- Questions the cut-off scores of the BDI-II and appropriate identification of those depressed.

- When should screening occur?

- Clinically some of the items seem to be inappropriate for use
  - Punishment ‘I feel I am being punished’
  - Feeling guilty ‘I feel guilty most of the time’

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