

PRELIMINARY VALIDATION STUDY OF A PORTUGUESE VERSION OF THE PATIENT HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE (PHQ-9)

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Introduction: Depression is one of the most common health issues impacting the university student population. The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) is a short measure that has the potential to serve as a dual-purpose instrument that establishes depressive disorder diagnoses as well as grades the depressive symptom severity.

Objectives: The current study was designed to study the psychometric properties of a Portuguese version of the PHQ-9 in a sample of university students.

Aims: Specifically, we examined the internal reliability and convergent validity of the measure.

Methods: The English language of the PHQ-9 was translated into Portuguese. The process involved back-translation, cross-cultural adaptation, field testing of the pre-final version, as well as final adjustments. A sample of university students completed the PHQ-9, the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI).

Results: Complete data were obtained from 1241 participants. The mean age of the participants was 23.81 years (SD = 4.87) and 75.3% of them were females. The mean PHQ-9 score was 4.15 (SD = 4.05). The Portuguese version of the PHQ-9 had satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.86) and showed moderate convergent validity with the HADS anxiety ($r = 0.61$; $p < 0.01$) and HADS depression ($r = 0.59$; $p < 0.01$), and strong convergent validity with the BDI ($r = 0.85$; $p < 0.01$).

Conclusions: The PHQ-9 has good psychometric properties amongst Portuguese university students. Implications for using the measure as an assessment instrument in the university setting are discussed.