

P124 - Defining Mild, Moderate and Severe Distress on the Distress Thermometer - A Pooled Analysis of International Raw Data

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OBJECTIVES There has been much research on the DT but current cut-offs are somewhat arbitrary. In 2007 the NCCN suggested a cut-point of 4v5 for significant distress; in 2008 this was revised to 3v4. We wished to clarify appropriate thresholds for significant distress as well as defining minimal, mild, moderate and severe distress using the Distress Thermometer.

METHODS We pooled published raw data from DT validation studies and requested data from authors. Data was pooled from eight independent studies involving over 2500 people with cancer. We used previously reported large scale studies involving the HADS applied to 20,000 individuals to establish the most likely distribution of distress from least severe (but most common) to most severe (but least common).

RESULTS Across all studies, using the 2007 NCCN definition 37.5% of patients would be defined as significantly distressed and using the 2008 definition this would be 46%.

Applying a simple algorithm to the data suggests that the following severities of distress are appropriate: insignificant (0-1); minimal (2-3); mild (4-5); moderate (6-7); severe (8-10).

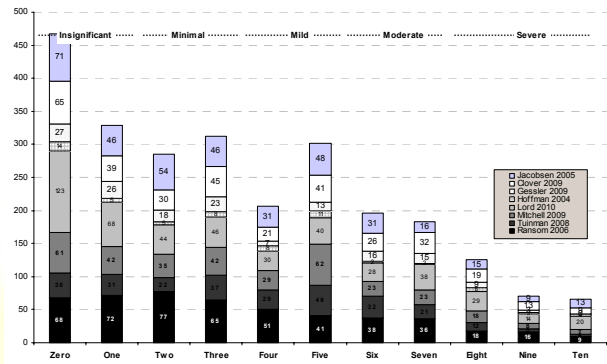
Insignificant and minimal can be considered below threshold and Mild, moderate and severe combined can be considered above threshold. From the pooled raw data the proportion of patients in each category are as follows:

CONCLUSIONS A simple categorical threshold on the DT can and should be improved. We suggest that definitions of minimal (2-3); mild (4-5); moderate (6-7); severe (8-10) are considered in future work. At these cuts the proportion with insignificant distress is - 29%; minimal - 21%; moderate - 15% and severe - 10% (table)

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS We recommend clinicians use the listed cut-offs to define levels of distress on the DT. Researchers may use other methods to validate cut-offs

LIMITATIONS Addition of further data would strengthen these findings.

Declarations None Funding None



Score	Ransom 2006	Tuinman 2008	Mitchell 2009	Lord 2010	Hoffman 2004	Gessler 2009	Clover 2009	Jacobsen 2005	Sum	Proportion
Zero	68	38	61	123	14	27	65	71	467	18.4%
One	72	31	42	68	5	26	39	46	329	12.9%
Two	77	22	35	44	5	18	30	54	285	11.2%
Three	65	37	42	46	8	23	45	46	312	12.3%
Four	51	29	29	30	8	7	21	31	206	8.1%
Five	41	46	62	40	11	13	41	48	302	11.9%
Six	38	32	23	28	2	16	26	31	196	7.7%
Seven	36	21	23	38	2	15	32	16	183	7.2%
Eight	18	12	18	29	6	9	19	15	126	5.0%
Nine	16	5	8	14	3	3	13	9	71	2.8%
Ten	9	4	7	20	4	0	9	13	66	2.6%
Sum	491	277	350	480	68	157	340	380	2543	
Proportion	19.3%	10.9%	13.8%	18.9%	2.7%	6.2%	13.4%	14.9%		

