

A New Assessment for the Measurement of Expressivity in Schizophrenia

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Semi-structured interview

All items should be rated

Elicit both positive and negative emotions

Can rate on none-prompts

Note basis for rating

Blunted Affect Subscale

Blunted affect refers to a decrease in the outward expression of emotion, and the prompts interview are designed to elicit emotion. There are no specific probes for Alogia subscales; ratings are based on the responses to other questions during the interview. If the patient does not respond to the prompts asking about emotional experiences, this item can be rated based on the responses to other questions during the interview. Be sure to note at the bottom of the scale the basis for the rating.

Interview Prompts for Rating Blunted Affect and Alogia

NOTE: Be sure to ask questions that elicit BOTH positive and negative emotion. If the subject does not respond to the prompts asking about emotional experiences, items can be rated based on the responses to other questions during the interview. Be sure to note at the bottom of each rating scale the basis for the rating.

Interview Prompts (Cont.)

What do you enjoy?

What makes you feel good?

Describe a time when you have felt calm

What excites you?

Tell me about a time when you recently felt happy

What bothers you?

What upsets you?

What do you find irritating or that makes you angry?

Tell me about a time when you recently felt sad

Tell me about a time when you felt afraid

What makes you feel embarrassed?

FACIAL EXPRESSION

When making the facial expression rating, consider facial movements across all parts of the face, including the eyes (e.g., raised brows), mouth (smiling or grimacing), and mid-face (e.g., wrinkled nose when disgusted).

- 0 *no impairment* - Well within normal limits; animated recounting emotional experiences, with many appropriate changes in facial expressions.
- 1 *very slight deficit* - Very slight decrease, of questionable clinical relevance, in frequency and intensity of facial expressions when recounting emotional experiences.
- 2 *mild deficit* - Mild decrease in frequency or intensity of facial expressions; shows at least two changes in the face during recounting of each emotional experience.
- 3 *moderate deficit* - Notable decrease in frequency and intensity of facial expressions; shows only one change in facial expression in response to each question.

FACIAL EXPRESSION (cont.)

- 4 *moderately severe deficit* - Significant lack of facial expressions when recounting emotional experiences; shows facial expressions for only one or two questions; may show only three or four changes in expression in the entire conversation.
- 5 *marked deficit* - Obvious lack of positive and negative facial expressions in response to all questions; may show only one or two slight changes in facial expression during the entire conversation.
- 6 *severe deficit* - Nearly total lack of facial expressions throughout the conversation.
- 9 *not rated* - Subject hides face.

VOCAL EXPRESSION

One of the components of blunted affect is modulation of the voice. Three dimensions should be considered: variation in the speed, volume, and pitch of what is spoken (words as well as other speech). The content of speech is not rated here.

- 0 *no impairment* - Normal expression of affect, with normal changes in speed, volume, and pitch of speech apparent.
- 1 *very slight deficit* - Slight decrease in vocal expression of affect; of questionable clinical significance.
- 2 *mild deficit* - Mild but definite decrease in vocal expression of affect.
- 3 *moderate deficit* - Moderate decrease in vocal expression of affect; decrease may not be noticed immediately.
- 4 *moderately severe deficit* - Decrease in vocal expression of affect is easily noticed.
- 5 *marked deficit* - Decrease in vocal expression of affect is readily apparent throughout the interview.
- 6 *severe deficit* - No or almost no vocal expression of affect.
- 9 *not rated* - *Subject does not speak.*

EXPRESSIVE GESTURES

Expressive gestures include gestures made with the head (e.g. nodding), shoulders (shrugging), arms and hands (pointing), and trunk (moving forward).

- 0 *no impairment* - Gestures are well within normal limits; uses many gestures of the arms, hands, shoulders, head, and/or body when recounting emotional experiences.
- 1 *very slight deficit* - Very slight decrease in the frequency of expressive gestures; of questionable clinical relevance
- 2 *mild deficit* - A mild decrease in the frequency of expressive gestures; exhibits at least two expressive gestures during the recounting of *each* emotional experience.
- 3 *moderate deficit* - Notable decrease in the frequency of expressive gestures; may show a slight gesture in response to each question.

EXPRESSIVE GESTURES (cont.)

4 *moderately severe deficit* - Significant lack of expressive gestures, exhibiting a gesture in response to only one or two of the questions; may show only three or four gestures throughout the entire conversation.

5 *marked deficit* - Obvious lack of expressive gestures. The reduced number of gestures occurs for all questions; may show only one or two slight gestures throughout the entire conversation.

6 *severe deficit* - Nearly total lack of expressive gestures; virtually no movement of arms, hands, head or body when recounting all emotional experiences.

EYE CONTACT

The eye contact rating is focused on the lack of eye contact rather than the subject's "staring through" the interviewer and holding an intense gaze throughout the conversation.

0 *no impairment* - Well within normal limits, the subject seeks and maintains appropriate eye contact throughout the conversation.

1 *very slight deficit* - Very slight decrease in the frequency of eye contacts sought by the subject or a minimal tendency to avoid eye contact initiated by the examiner; of questionable clinical relevance.

2 *mild deficit* - A mild decrease in the frequency of eye contacts; looks away on at least two occasions when recounting emotional experiences or in response to questions.

EYE CONTACT (cont.)

3 *moderate deficit* - Notable decrease in the frequency of eye contacts; may respond without establishing eye contact, with eye contact once in response to each question.

4 *moderately severe deficit* - Significant lack of eye contact; may show only three or four brief eye contacts throughout the entire conversation.

5 *marked deficit* - Obvious lack of eye contact evident for all questions; may show only one or two brief eye contacts during the entire conversation.

6 *severe deficit* - Nearly total lack of eye contact; shows no initiation of eye contact when recounting all emotional experiences and avoids all eye contact attempts initiated by interviewer.

SPONTANEOUS MOVEMENTS

When rating spontaneous movements, consider all such movements, including adjustment of position, crossing arms, and shifting legs.

0 *no impairment* - Well within normal limits; maintains typical body movements, such as adjusting position, crossing arms, shifting legs, throughout the conversation.

1 *very slight deficit* - Very slight decrease in the frequency of spontaneous movements; of questionable clinical relevance.

2 *mild deficit* - A mild decrease in the frequency of body movements; moves on at least two occasions when recounting *each* emotional experience or in response to questions.

3 *moderate deficit* - Notable decrease in the frequency of spontaneous movements; may have a slight movement when recounting an emotional experience or in response to each question.

MOVEMENTS (cont.)

4 *moderately severe deficit* - Significant lack of spontaneous movements when recounting emotional experiences, showing spontaneous movements for only one or two of the questions; may show only three or four spontaneous movements throughout the entire conversation.

5 *marked deficit* - Obvious lack of spontaneous movements evident during the recounting of emotional experiences for all questions; may show only one or two brief spontaneous movements during the entire conversation.

6 *severe deficit* - The subject shows virtually no spontaneous movements when recounting all emotional experiences during the conversation.

BLUNTED AFFECT SUBSCALE: JUDGMENT OF CAUSE

Based on all available information, what is your judgment as to the principal cause of any observed deficit in affect and speech? Choose only one. If more than one IS significant, pick the most important.

- Does not apply, as all ratings are less than 2**
- Depression and/or anxiety**
- Suspiciousness**
- Other hallucinations and/or delusions**
- Disorganization**
- Medication side effect or a general medical condition**
- None of the above**

ALOGIA SUBSCALE

QUANTITY OF SPEECH

This item refers to the simple quantity of words spoken. Such abnormalities as disorganization, neologisms, or psychotic content are not rated here. Mutism is rated as a 9.

0 *no impairment* - Normal amount of speech.

1 *very slight deficit* - Questionable decrease in the quantity of speech; answers provide appropriate information and sufficient detail, but are typically concise.

2 *mild deficit* - Although sufficient information is usually provided, the amount of detail is less than desirable or appropriate; the interviewer may have to repeat queries.

3 *moderate deficit* - At times sufficient information or appropriate detail is not provided; the interviewer commonly has to repeat queries or ask in another way.

4 *moderately severe deficit* - At least half of the replies are monosyllabic or very brief.

5 *marked deficit* - Most answers are monosyllabic.

6 *severe deficit* - All or nearly all replies are monosyllabic.

9 *not rated* - Subject does not speak.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW TOPICS

This item rates the subject's contribution to the topics discussed in the interview. New topics can include background information given to clarify a question, resulting in the subject's giving more than the minimum amount of information needed to answer a question.

- 0 *no impairment* - Interaction between subject and rater is more like a conversation than an interview, with subject introducing new topics freely. Subject may be overly talkative or have pressure of speech.
- 1 *very slight deficit* - Subject freely introduces many new topics, with background information given frequently, or numerous opportunities taken to chat with the interviewer.
- 2 *mild deficit* - Subject introduces several new topics, but is usually focused on just the information that is required.
- 3 *moderate deficit* - Definite decrease in number of new topics introduced.
- 4 *moderately severe deficit* - Subject introduces few new topics, but has at least one clear digression that is not strictly needed.
- 5 *marked deficit* - most answers provide just the information needed.
- 6 *severe deficit* - Subject does not introduce any new topics.
- 9 *not rated* - Subject does not speak

ALOGIA SUBSCALE: JUDGMENT OF CAUSE

Based on all available information, what is your judgment as to the principal cause of any observed deficit in speech? Choose only one. If you think more than one makes a significant contribution, pick the most important factor.

- Does not apply, as all ratings are less than 2**
- Depression and/or anxiety**
- Suspiciousness**
- Other hallucinations and/or delusions**
- Disorganization**
- Medication side effect or a general medical condition**
- None of the above**