An International Study of the GRID-HAMD: Has it Fulfilled its Promise?

INTRODUCTION

The Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HAM-D) has been the subject of many critiques (Bugay et al, 2004). An international group representing academic, clinical, the pharmaceutical industry and government developed the GRID-HAMD in an attempt to cross these critiques and improve administration of the HAM-D (Williams et al, 2008). The GRID-HAMD provides a novel grid scoring structure that separates frequency and intensity to allow clinicians to rate these as independent axes. The newly-formulated instrument also provides a structured interview guide and scoring conventions on the same page as each item. Finally, the GRID-HAMD presents revised anchor points for items that were problematic or inconsistently rated.

The GRID-HAMD has now been available for five years and has been the major outcome measure for several large clinical trials. This poster presents the results of a survey of a global cohort of 74 highly trained and calibrated clinical interviewers who have collectively administered the GRID-HAMD 4050 times in global clinical trials.

GRID-HAMD Sample Items

1. Depressed Mood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom Intensity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Almost all of the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Much of the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Almost all of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>anchors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Depressed Mood</td>
<td>anchors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Loss of appetite</td>
<td>anchors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

METHODS

The survey was distributed to 74 experienced and well-trained clinical raters in July 2013. It was completed by 61 (81 percent) raters with the following characteristics:

- Mean age: 40 years
- Educational background: 40 (67 percent) were MD or PhD, the remaining 33 percent were psychologists, social workers, or psychiatrists
- All respondents had at least three years experience administering the HAM-D
- Location: 55 percent live in Europe, 40 percent in US, 5 percent in Russia, 2 percent in South Africa

The survey included statements about the GRID-HAMD that were rated on a seven-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Statements covered ease of use and ease as well as the new page layout, the revised item wordings and the grid format. In addition, raters were asked to nominate the items they found most difficult to administer as well as those they found the easiest to administer, and describe the reasons for these opinions.

Finally, the questionnaire listed four statements asking raters to compare the GRID-HAMD with the SIGH-D, a widely used version of the HAM-D (Williams, 1986), with a response from 1:GRID-HAMD to 7: SIGH-D Sample Item.

RESULTS

Easiest and most difficult GRID-HAMD items

Respondents were asked to nominate the items they found easiest and most difficult in the GRID-HAMD, and why.

Reasons cited:
- Items are clearly defined
- Ease of administration and scoring
- Fewer items
- No need for different intensity levels
- No need for different frequency levels

Comparison of GRID-HAMD with SIGH-D

The GRID-HAMD was rated as slightly preferable on all items except graphical layout.

CONCLUSIONS

The GRID-HAMD is well accepted by clinical raters. Raters positively endorsed its new grid format with separate ratings for symptom intensity and frequency, as well as the new page layout, including the scale conventions on the same page as each item. Also, its revised anchor points were endorsed as clearly defined and useful. Raters clearly prefer the graphical layout of the GRID-HAMD, with its interview questions, and its conventions, all on the same page. Surprisingly, however, raters indicated an overall preference for the SIGH-D.

REFERENCES


Acknowledgement: This work was supported by MedAvante Inc. The authors would like to acknowledge the help of Ellen Carter, PhD.

Note: The GRID-HAMD may be downloaded, free of charge, at www.iscdd.org. The SIGH-D is available from Janet Williams, PhD at jwilliams@medavante.com, who receives royalties from this instrument.

©2013 MedAvante Inc.