Primary Care PTSD Screen

In your life, have you ever had any experience that was so frightening, horrible, or upsetting that, in the past month, you*

1. Have had nightmares about it or thought about it when you did not want to?

YES NO

2. Tried hard not to think about it or went out of your way to avoid situations that reminded you of it?

YES NO

3. Were constantly on guard, watchful, or easily startled?

YES NO

4. Felt numb or detached from others, activities, or your surroundings?

YES NO

Current research suggests that the results of the PC-PTSD should be considered "positive" if a patient answers "yes" to any three items.

The primary care PTSD screen (PC–PTSD): development and operating characteristics

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Source: Primary Care Psychiatry, Volume 9, Number 1, 1 January 2004, pp. 9-14(6) Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a frequently unrecognized anxiety disorder in primary care settings. This study reports on the development and operating characteristics of a brief 4-item screen for PTSD in primary care (PC-PTSD). 188 VA primary care patients completed the PC-PTSD, the PTSD Symptom Checklist (PCL) and the Clinician Administered Scale for PTSD (CAPS). The prevalence of PTSD was 24.5%. Signal detection analyses showed that with this base rate, the PC-PTSD had an optimally efficient cutoff score of 3 for both male and female patients. A cutoff score of 2 is recommended when sensitivity rather than efficiency is optimized. The PC-PTSD outperformed the PCL in terms of overall quality, sensitivity, specificity, efficiency, and quality of efficiency. The PC-PTSD appears to be a psychometrically sound screen for PTSD with comparable operating characteristics to other screens for mental disorders.