

The Somatoform Dissociation Questionnaire SDQ-20¹

The 20-item Somatoform Dissociation Questionnaire (SDQ-20, Nijenhuis et al., 1996) evaluates the severity of somatoform dissociation. The SDQ-20 items were derived from a pool of 75 items describing clinically observed somatoform dissociative symptoms that in clinical settings had appeared upon activation of particular dissociative parts of the personality and that could not be medically explained. The items pertain to both negative (e.g., analgesia) and positive dissociative phenomena (e.g., site-specific pain).

Each individual item asks about the frequency that a particular somatoform dissociative symptom is experienced using a Likert 5-point scale, ranging from “1 = this applies to me NOT AT ALL” to “5 = this applies to me EXTREMELY.” The respondent is also asked to indicate whether a physician has connected the symptom or bodily experience with a physical disease. In clinical practice the relevant item score can be adjusted to “1” when physical disease is indicated, the medical diagnosis has been checked with the physician who assigned it, and this diagnosis seems valid. The SDQ-20 score, which may range from 20 to 100, is obtained by the sum of the individual item scores.

The SDQ-20 discriminates between dissociative identity disorder, dissociative disorder NOS, somatoform disorders, and other psychiatric diagnostic categories. Scores over 30 are significant for the presence of somatoform dissociation. In studies using this scale, most patients with DID scored over 50, most of those with DDNOS scored over 40, and most of those with somatoform disorders scored over 30.

SDQ-20

This questionnaire asks about different physical symptoms or body experiences, which you may have had either briefly or for a longer time. Please indicate to what extent these experiences apply to you *in the past year*. For each statement, please circle the number in the first column that best applies to YOU.

The possibilities are:

1 = this applies to me NOT AT ALL

2 = this applies to me A LITTLE

1 From “The Scoring and Interpretation of the SDQ-20 and SDQ-5” (Nijenhuis, 2010).