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**Price & Availability** – Contact author for permission to use. [Click here to view user's manual].

**Brief Description of Instrument** – Developed as a cancer-specific tool for assessing symptoms. Subjects respond about how they have been feeling during the preceding week. Validation with chronic disease (primarily cancer) patients. Also used in breast disease and pregnancy. Previously used in inpatient, clinic and home care settings.

**Administration time** – 5-10 minutes.

**Scale Format** – 1 to 5 Likert-type scales, with 5 indicating the most distress; 13 items.

**Administration Technique** – Self-administered questionnaire.

**Scoring and Interpretation** – Items rated 3 or higher are considered to indicate serious distress. A total summed score of 25 or above indicates moderate distress; scores of 33 or above indicate severe distress that requires immediate intervention.
Factors and Norms – Unidimensional, 13 items.

Test-retest Reliability and Internal Consistency – Internal consistency and reliability investigated in 47 different studies, please see manual for more information.

Construct Validity – Compared with Ware’s health perception questionnaire in cancer patients (r=0.90). SDS discriminated between cancer patients and cardiac patients. Discriminated home care patients from controls at 6-week intervals.

Responsive to Change Over Time – Detected greater changes in patients’ symptoms at the completion of treatment and during active tumor growth. Patients whose condition remained stable had little or no changed in their scores.

Content & Face Validity – Demonstrated face and content validity for specific symptoms.

Strengths – Use of standardized instrument results in systematic assessment of patient symptom distress when compared to individually established criteria.

Limitations – The instrument is specific to a limited number of symptoms.

Notes for Consideration - SDS has been translated into French, Italian, Spanish and Swedish.

Symptom Distress Scale (SDS)

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