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Efficacy of Different Measures in Identifying the Prevalence of Depression in Palliative Care
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Introduction
Patients with terminal illness often experience elevated level of psychological distress. According to the DSM-IV TR's definition, depression is highly prevalent in palliative care patients. In clinical practice, there is concern about both insufficient and excessive diagnosis and treatment of depression. In order to better identify patients' level of depression, the sensitivity and specificity of different clinical measures in identifying this common clinical condition was investigated. This could assist in identifying patients who would benefit from specific psychotherapeutic or pharmacological intervention.

Objectives
To investigate the sensitivity and specificity of different measures in identifying the prevalence of depression

Methodology
A group of 90 adult patients with comparable demographics and medical conditions (either malignant illness or End Stage Renal Failure) were recruited from WTSH Palliative Care Unit to fill in 3 different psychometric scales to assess their psychological distress. The 3 scales include: The 14-item Hospital Anxiety and Depression scale (HADS) (including the anxiety subscale and depression subscale), the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) and the Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS).

Result
Patient's conditions Among the 90 patients, 41.1% (N=37) of patients filled out the HADS, 32.2% (N=29) filled out the GDS while 26.7 % (N=24) filled out the DASS. For HADs, using the cut-off of 11, 21.6% (N=8) patients were identified as being clinically depressed. Among these 8 patients, 6 were diagnosed as having major depression by the Clinical Psychologist (CP) according to the DSM-IV-R. The sensitivity of this measure is 75%. Those below cut-off are all found to be free from major depression. The specificity of this measure is 100% For GDS, using the cut-off of 8, 72.4% (N=21) patients were identified as being clinically depressed. Among these 21 patients, 1

patient was diagnosed as having major depression by the CP according to the DSM-IV-R. The sensitivity of this measure is 4.8%. Those below cut off are all found to be free from depression. The specificity of this measure is 100%. For DASS, using the cut-off of 13 (moderate range or above), 50% (N=12) patients were identified as being clinically depressed. Among these 12 patients, 4 were diagnosed as having major depression by the CP as having Major depression according to the DSM-IV-R. The sensitivity of this measure is 33.3%. Those below cut-off area are all found to be free from depression. The specificity of this measure is 100% Conclusion 1.By comparing the sensitivity and specificity of the above measures, it is found that the efficacy of HADS in identifying depression is superior to GDS and DASS. 2. Future study should include inter-rater check of both screening questionnaire and clinical judgment of the CP. 3. Future research area should aim to develop specific local measures for palliative patients in detecting their psychological distress, ranging from possible clinical conditions to other psychological dimensions of sufferings.