



UK NSC depression recommendation

Following a review of the evidence against strict criteria, the UK NSC does not currently recommend universal screening for depression in adults

Depression affects people in different ways and has a wide variety of symptoms which vary in severity. These symptoms range from lasting feelings of sadness, hopelessness and anxiety to physical symptoms such as pain or tiredness.

The UK NSC does not recommend screening the general population for depression due to concerns over the available test and treatment. There is national guidance on the identification of depression in groups where it is more common such as older people with hearing loss.

The review focussed on the available tests and the long term benefits from screening in the general population.

Key findings supporting the UK NSC recommendation

- The questionnaire-based tests used to identify people who are at risk of depression are not reliable when used in the general population. Many people would be falsely identified as having depression.
- Although screening would detect people who are at risk of developing depression, there is no clear evidence that treatment would prevent people with mild depression going on to develop severe depression.

The UK NSC regularly reviews its recommendations on screening for different conditions in the light of new research evidence becoming available.

To find out more about the UK NSC's depression recommendation, please visit:

www.screening.nhs.uk/depression

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) is chaired by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England, advises Ministers and the NHS in the four UK countries about all aspects of screening and supports implementation of screening programmes. Using research evidence, pilot programmes and economic evaluation, it assesses the evidence for programmes against a set of internationally recognised criteria covering the condition, the test, the treatment options and the effectiveness and acceptability of the screening programme. Assessing programmes in this way is intended to ensure that they do more good than harm at a reasonable cost. The UK NSC also sets up practical mechanisms to oversee the introduction of new programmes in the English NHS and monitors effectiveness and quality of these programmes.

Find out more about the UK National Screening Committee at www.screening.nhs.uk. The UK NSC evidence review process is described at www.screening.nhs.uk/policyreview and a list of all UK NSC recommendations can be found at www.screening.nhs.uk/recommendations

The UK NSC is supported by Public Health England (www.gov.uk/phe).