

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION QUESTIONNAIRE (SCQ)

The Social Communication Questionnaire (SCQ) is one tool clinicians use when screening an individual for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It is a measure for caregivers to complete. Caregivers need to be familiar with the individual's developmental history and current behavior. It is used in both clinical and research settings.

Name	Social Communication Questionnaire (SCQ)
Reference	Rutter M, Bailey A & Lord C (2003). The Social Communication Questionnaire. Los Angeles: Western Psychological Services
Summary	<p>The SCQ is widely used as a screener for entry into research studies on ASD. It was designed as a questionnaire version of the Autism Diagnostic Interview - Revised (ADI-R), the gold standard developmental history measure that is widely used in research and often in clinical practice. Caregivers can rate the individual's "lifetime" characteristics (which would be used to support a diagnosis) or "current" characteristics (which would be used to support an evaluation of current difficulties). Like most questionnaires, it was primarily developed on individuals who had already been clinically referred because of concerns of ASD or who had already been diagnosed. However, compared to other rating scales, the development research was significantly more robust, including good diagnostic validation on participants, and it has been widely adopted by both the research and clinical community.</p>

Age Range	The individual should have a mental age of at least 2.0 years. Otherwise, this measure can be used with individuals of any chronological age.
Format	Two versions: Lifetime and Current. Each is a 40-item parent report measure, yes/no format. Each take approximately 10 minutes to complete, 5 minutes to score.
Who Can Rate	The SCQ is completed by the principal caregiver who is familiar with both the developmental history and current behavior of the individual.
Who Can Interpret	The SCQ score should be interpreted by someone with professional training in the care and treatment of individuals on the autism spectrum.
Results Yielded	<p>The Lifetime version yields a Total Score that is interpreted with reference to cutoff scores. Scores above the cutoff of 15 suggest the individual is likely to be on the autism spectrum and a more extended evaluation should be undertaken. Researchers may want to use a lower or higher cutoff depending on the purpose (for example, a lower cutoff would increase sensitivity, a higher cutoff would increase specificity).</p> <p>Current scores (last 3 months) help the clinician understand the individual's current daily experiences and evaluate treatment and educational plans. The 3 domains of Social Relating, Communication, and Range of Interests can also be scored, but the utility of this has not been widely researched.</p>

<p>Author's Suggested Uses</p>	<p>This was created as a screening instrument; scores above the cutoff suggest that a full evaluation (for example, using the ADI-R and Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule - "ADOS") is warranted. It may be possible to use this measure to compare overall levels of ASD symptomatology across different samples and/or across time. The Current form may be helpful as a measure of current level of severity, but this has not been well studied.</p>
<p>Author Cautions</p>	<p>As a screening measure, the SCQ is not suitable for individual diagnosis; items must be compared to clinical observations. Scores at the cutoff (as opposed to above the cutoff) may need to be examined as potential false negatives. No data has been reported on false positives. Finally, there is limited data on non-ASD conditions that involve overlapping difficulties (for example, Attachment Disorder, ADHD, OCD).</p>
<p>Item Development</p>	<p>Items came from the ADI-R, which is considered the "gold standard" measure for gathering developmental history related to ASD.</p>
<p>Development Research</p>	<p>Three samples were used for developing this measure. Unlike many rating scales, these individuals had extensive diagnostic and clinical data available through previous or concurrent participation in other research studies. Sample 1: 200 individuals (160 with confirmed ASD diagnoses, 40 individuals without an ASD diagnosis but with other developmental or behavioral diagnoses). All parents had participated in an ADI-R (often years before) and were then asked to complete the SCQ. Sample 2: 21 children. Parents were asked to complete the SCQ and then participated in an ADI-R. Sample 3: 81 individuals. Parents completed the SCQ and then an ADI-R 2 months later.</p>

Related Articles:

- [Getting an Evaluation for Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

- [Who is Able to Diagnose Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)
- [Elements of an Evaluation for Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

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