

KENNEDY AXIS V ASSESSMENT IN AN ITALIAN

OUTPATIENT AND INPATIENT POPULATION

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ABSTRACT

Objective: We examined the Kennedy Axis V's (K Axis') interrater reliability by using it with an Italian clinical population. The Kennedy Axis V (K Axis) acts as an alternative tool to the DSM-IV-TR Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) Scale, which many researchers describe as a scale with poor interrater reliability and clinical utility. Unlike the GAF scale, K Axis provides a multidimensional and multi-axial approach to measure personal, social and interpersonal functioning in psychiatric outpatients and inpatients.

Methods: Clinicians used Kennedy Axis V to assess global functioning among 180 inpatients, in 9 psychiatric services in Lombardia and Piemonte. Patients were divided into 4 different diagnostic groups, according to the DSM-IV-TR criteria.

Results: Intraclass correlations between two independent raters' scores reveal high level of interrater reliability for all K Axis scales ($0,633 < ICC < 0,813$). Highly significant results in the Kruskal-Wallis test demonstrate that the patient's diagnosis influences all the scales' scores. Significant differences in patients functioning profiles in all K Axis scales, apart from the Violence scale, were noted between different diagnostic groups.

Conclusions: In this study a high level of raters' agreement was noted, even if the K Axis scales were used in different mental health services from different clinicians. K Axis scales provide a useful profile of patient global functioning, in line with the specific pathology.

Clinical Implications

- The Kennedy Axis V (K Axis) is a reliable alternative to the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) Scale to measure overall functioning of psychiatric inpatients and outpatients in different mental health services.
- The K Axis can profile psychological functioning in different diagnostic groups.
- The K Axis overcomes GAF limitations in planning psychiatric treatment and rehabilitation and in tracking outcome.

Limitations

- The sample size precluded a detailed analyses of psychometric properties of the Kennedy Axis V.
- The sample was not balanced by diagnosis or demographics.
- Staff professionals have different professional backgrounds.

Keywords: V Axis, DSM, K Axis, global functioning, dual-diagnosis.