

Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Infants (HoNOSI) Frequently Asked Questions

How do we distinguish between Scale One and Scale Nine when we think there is anxiety underlying some aggressive behaviour?

Both scales cover how infants handle strong feelings. With Scale One, it is the manifestation of those strong feelings as disruptive or oppositional behaviours that is being rated. Where the strong feelings are manifesting as anxiety, depression etc., they will be rated at Scale Nine. One of the reasons the phrases 'over-controlled' or 'under-controlled emotional regulation' was used was to prompt clinicians to consider how emotions are being regulated. Remembering that different phenomena can be rated at different scales. For example, it may be that angry outbursts are rated at Scale One and the anxiety about separation that the clinician assesses underlies the anger be rated at Scale Nine.

On Scale Four, there seem to be two concepts that overlap, problems with eating and issues with nutritional deficits. Are these concepts treated equally, or is one seen as more critical to severe ratings? Similarly, with scales like Scale Eleven, where there is both self care and environmental exploration?

Both concepts are treated equally. It is the clinician's judgement as to which issue, or how the combination of issues are rated on the five point ordinal scale.

On Scale Ten, social reciprocity, how do you consider the relative severity of different presentations? For example, will those with autism always be rated as having more problems than those without?

HoNOSI is not diagnostically prescriptive. There is no rule that diagnosis x must receive rating y. The clinician decides how severe the rating should be. It is worth remembering that the principles for all scales acknowledge that a rating does not just reflect the infant alone. They may include '...the infant's temperament, parent's responses, interactions and level of distress regarding aspects of the infant's behaviour and presentation'. Within all diagnoses, there will be variability in symptom severity and so it is unlikely that one diagnosis will always receive the most severe rating for all infants for all of the time. It is also worth noting that a rating of 4 does not have to be reserved only for the most severe presentation of all time. Someone may be rated at 4 and get worse.

On Scale Twelve, what is meant by family?

Family is a social construct. It includes the group of individuals the clinician considers fundamentally involved with the infant. They may be delivering care or providing support to the infant or supporting the direct caregivers. They may be in a position to provide care, but for any reason, may not be able to. It may also be that estranged or absent family members are impacting on the infant.