

# Using and scoring manual for: The Dementia Carer Assessment of support Needs Tool (DeCANT)

## Purpose of DeCANT

The Dementia Carer Assessment of support Needs Tool (DeCANT) is a self-administered instrument for carers, aimed at assessing their support needs when caring for a person with dementia (1). A carer is any person who helps a family member, spouse/partner or friend in need of personal and/or practical assistance out of personal motivation rather than financial compensation. It consists of 25 items distributed on four subscales. DeCANT can be used to:

- a. focus on the carer's support needs in order to improve their health and well-being.
- b. identify the carer's support needs in order to enable timely supportive interventions.
- c. describe the carer's support needs in general in order to create or improve supportive interventions.

The DeCANT provides an individual profile of the carer's physical, psychological and social support needs in correspondence with WHO's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (2). With the purpose of supporting carers in their caring role, this instrument is developed for use in health and social care to enable person-centred assessment of the carer's support needs as well as to facilitate dialogue between carers and professionals. The DeCANT is suitable for all carers in both home care and residential care settings.

## Linking DeCANT to ICF

Each item within the four DeCANT subscales is linked to a first level ICF category (see Table 1) (2,3). Linking support needs to an ICF category can be used to target individual support needs to maintain or improve a carer's functioning in daily life when providing essential care to a person with dementia.

**Table 1:** Linking of the four subscales in DeCANT to the ICF.

DeCANT subscale	ICF first level category	Items
Daily life when caring	Activity and participation component	Item 1-8 (eight items)
Your well-being	Body structures and functions component	Item 9-12 (four items)
Focus on yourself	Personal factors	Item 13-16 (four items)
Your surroundings	Environmental factors	Item 17-25 (nine items)

## How to use DeCANT

The DeCANT is a self-administered instrument for carers to fill out on their own. When administering DeCANT, the person responsible for handing out the instrument, should carefully instruct the carer on the purpose of using DeCANT in the specific context (a, b or c) and who to contact if questions arise.

It is very important that a dialogue takes place following scoring of DeCANT. Due to its sensitive content, carers may develop expectations about supportive interventions. DeCANT should therefore only be administered if supportive interventions can be initiated. In case DeCANT is applied solely to create or improve supportive interventions, it is important that the carer has been informed of this purpose of use. We recommend regular utilization of DeCANT, e.g. every six months, as support needs change concurrently within the context of caring.

## How to score DeCANT

Scoring each item with a value for the response categories is enough to carry out an individual assessment of support needs. Scoring values and our recommendations for interpretation of support needs are shown in Table 2 below.

When used in day-to-day health and social care, calculation of sum scores are not necessary. However, a profile of the carer's support needs can easily be calculated on the basis of the four subscales. Subscale scores are calculated by summing the value of response categories for all items within a subscale. A higher score represents more need for support. The subscale scores are shown in

Table 3 below.

**Table 2: Scoring of DeCANT.**

Response category	Scoring value	Interpretation of score
No (not relevant/met need)	0	No action is necessary
Yes, a little more	1	Probably no action necessary
Yes, quite a bit more	2	Supportive interventions should be considered
Yes, very much more	3	Supportive interventions are necessary

**Table 3: Sumscore for each subscale in DeCANT.**

DeCANT subscale	Subscale score range	Items
Daily life when caring	0-24	Item 1-8 (eight items)
Your well-being	0-12	Item 9-12 (four items)
Focus on yourself	0-12	Item 13-16 (four items)
Your surroundings	0-27	Item 17-25 (nine items)

## Missing data

If an answer is checked outside the boxes, the box closest to is chosen. If two boxes are checked, the answer that indicates less support need is chosen. If more than 25% of a subscale's items are omitted, a subscale score cannot be calculated (Daily life when caring: 25% = 2 items, Your well-being: 25%= 1 item, Focus on yourself: 25%= 1 item, Your surroundings: 25%= 2 items).

## References

- 1) Clemmensen TH, Kristensen HK, Andersen-Ranberg K, Lauridsen HH. *Development and Field-testing of the Dementia Carer Assessment of Support Needs Tool (DeCANT) 2020.*
- 2) World Health Organization. *ICF - International classification of functioning, disability and health. 2001:299.*
- 3) Cieza A, Fayed N, Bickenbach J, Prodinger B. *Refinements of the ICF Linking Rules to strengthen their potential for establishing comparability of health information. Disabil Rehabil 2016 Mar 17;41(5):1-10.*