

THE YOUNG SPINE QUESTIONNAIRE (YSQ)

USERS GUIDE

Version: 9 – 12 years

(Modified 06-06-2024)

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Young Spine Questionnaire (YSQ) is a self-report questionnaire assessing spinal pain prevalence, pain intensity, the consequences in terms of activity restriction, school absenteeism and care seeking behaviour, and the influence of parental back trouble in children aged 9-12 years.

It was developed in three phases:

- A conceptualisation phase
- A development phase
- A testing phase

YSQ questions have been classified according to the Wilson and Cleary conceptual model¹ and contain questions in the domains of:

- Symptom status
- Functional status
- Characteristics of the environment
- Characteristics of the individual

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The YSQ can be used free of charge for clinical and scientific purposes if 1) it is used according to the specifications in the original article and the users' guide, and 2) it is not modified.

TARGET POPULATION

The YSQ is targeted at children aged 9 to 12 years who suffers from pain in any area of the spine. It may be combined with the Young Disability Questionnaire (YDQ-spine) to identify the level of disability in children with spinal pain (see www.spoergeskemaer.dk/ydq).

YSQ takes approximately 12-15 minutes to fill out. The younger population may require more time and may need help with reading the questions.

STRUCTURE AND USE

The top section of the YSQ asks about name and class. The latter can be replaced with age if preferred.

The YSQ is structured into five sections. It is not necessary to use the full questionnaire, as each section can be used separately. It is therefore possible to use selected sections on their own or combine one or more section(s) with other questionnaires. The five sections are:

- **Section 1-3**

Section 1 to 3 measures pain frequency and intensity in three regions respectively:

- The neck
- The middle of the back
- The lower back

Each section has a picture outlining the area of interest, three questions on prevalence (lifetime, 1-week, and point prevalence), and a pain intensity scale for the worst pain (the revised Faces Pain Scale). The revised Faces Pain Scale consists of 6 faces with 'no pain' and 'very much pain' at the two extremes.²

- **Section 4**

Section 4 has three questions related to the consequences of spinal pain on school, recreation, and treatment.

- **Section 5**

Section 5 has four questions pertaining to the influence of parental back trouble.

SCORING INSTRUCTIONS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Each question in the YSQ is scored individually as follows:

- Questions 1a, 2a, 3a, 4a, 4b, and 4c: 0 (Never), 1 (Once or twice), 2 (Once in a while), and 3 (Often)
- Questions 1d, 2d, and 3d are scored from 0 – 5 with 0 = No pain and 5 = Very much pain
- Questions 5b, and 5d: 0 (Never), 1 (Once in a while), 2 (Often)
- No/yes questions: 0 (No), 1 (Yes)

No aggregate score is calculated.

DISTINGUISHING TRIVIAL FROM NON-TRIVIAL PAIN

Pain frequency and intensity for each spinal region (section 1-3) can be combined to a *composite score* distinguish trivial from non-trivial pain according to Joergensen et al.³ The composite score defines *Overall spinal pain* as 'no pain', 'moderate pain', or 'severe pain' and uses question 1a + 1d for the neck (section 1), 2a + 2d for the middle back (section 2), and 3a + 3d for the lower back (section 3) – see Figure 1.

Figure 1. Illustration of composition of frequency and pain intensity for neck, middle back, and lower back pain as well as *overall spinal pain*.

Frequency of pain	How much did it hurt at its worst					
	0 (no pain)	1	2	3	4	5 (very much pain)
Often	No pain		Moderate pain		Severe pain	
Once in a while						
Once or twice	No pain		Moderate pain		Severe pain	
Never	No pain		Moderate pain		Severe pain	

No other composite scores are recommended.

LANGUAGES

The YSQ is available in several languages (please see www.spoergeskemaer.dk/ysq). If you wish to translate and cross-culturally adapt the YSQ into another language, please send a request to Henrik Hein Lauridsen on e-mail: hlauridsen@health.sdu.dk. Translation and cross-cultural adaptation of the YSQ uses the English version and must follow the guidelines outlined by Beaton et al.⁴ and use the templates on the homepage (www.spoergeskemaer.dk/ysq).

QUESTIONS ABOUT YDQ

Questions about the YSQ can be directed to Henrik Hein Lauridsen on e-mail: hlauridsen@health.sdu.dk.

LITERATURE

1. Wilson IB, Cleary PD. Linking clinical variables with health-related quality of life. A conceptual model of patient outcomes. *JAMA* 1995;273(1):59–65.
2. Hicks CL, von Baeyer CL, Spafford PA, *et al.* The Faces Pain Scale-Revised: toward a common metric in pediatric pain measurement. *Pain* 2001;93(2):173–83.
3. Joergensen AC, Hestbaek L, Andersen PK, *et al.* Epidemiology of spinal pain in children: a study within the Danish National Birth Cohort. *Eur J Pediatr* 2019;178(5):695–706.
4. Beaton DE, Bombardier C, Guillemin F, *et al.* Guidelines for the process of cross-cultural adaptation of self-report measures. *Spine* 2000;25(24):3186–91.