

Introduction

The Hooked on Nicotine Checklist (HONC) is a validated measure of autonomy over adolescent tobacco use. It is useful for identifying when nicotine dependence has begun and for measuring the severity of dependence. The HONC may detect lower levels of nicotine dependence than the mFTQ detects. This sensitivity is particularly relevant for adolescent smokers. The construct measured by the HONC (loss of autonomy) is different from that measured by the mFTQ or FTND (physiologic withdrawal). The HONC and FTND scores are modestly correlated with each other. One study of adults smokers found 44% of the variability (r -square = 0.44) in the FTND score explained by the HONC score.

Scoring

The HONC instrument is a 10-item checklist format with each item having dichotomous (yes/no) answers. The sum of the number of "yes" answers determines the HONC score. As the score increases from 1 to 10, it indicates increasing amounts of loss of autonomy over smoking.

Use of the HONC

The HONC is useful in illustrating to adolescents that cigarette smoking can lead to nicotine addiction (i.e., loss of autonomy over smoking) and the degree of their addiction. This awareness may motivate adolescents to stop smoking, especially in the early stages of addiction development. Although we have not been able to identify research studies that used this score to guide treatment, it is reasonable to infer that individuals with a higher score would require more intensive tobacco-dependence treatment efforts. The mFTQ and FTND scores may be more sensitive than the HONC to higher levels of nicotine dependence and, therefore, can be used to differentiate between moderate and high levels of nicotine dependence for those with a high score on the HONC. On the other hand, for those with a low score on the FTND or mFTQ, it would be reasonable to evaluate a HONC score to better assess loss of autonomy over smoking behaviors.

The Hooked on Nicotine Checklist is included in this Tool Kit and it can be downloaded, with extensive supporting information, from <http://fmchapps.umassmed.edu/honc/>. It has been translated into seven languages.