Herpes Attitude Scale

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The Herpes Attitude Scale (HAS) assesses beliefs and feelings about genital herpes. Subject areas include feelings about self, feelings about others who have herpes, communication about herpes, intimate relationships, friendship relationships, perceived coping abilities, and myths. People who have positive attitudes about herpes can be discriminated from those who have negative attitudes.

**Description**

This scale is a 40-item Likert scale (5 points) with response options labeled *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*. The items on the scale were selected from an initial pool of 65 opinion statements about herpes. They were judged for readability by five undergraduate students and for acceptability for inclusion in the scale by a panel of five expert judges. The judges agreed on 45 of the original items for inclusion in the scale. The scale was administered to 250 undergraduate students in introductory psychology courses, and an item analysis was conducted to identify the statements that could best discriminate high and low scorers. Forty items had statistically significant item-total correlations ($p < .001$). These items were arranged in random order, and the scale was tested for reliability. This scale was designed to measure college students’ attitudes about herpes but could be used for other populations.

**Response Mode and Timing**

Respondents circle or blacken one response option for each item on a separate labeled answer sheet. Most respondents complete the scale within 15 minutes.

**Scoring**

The 20 positive items (2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 38, and 40) are scored such that *Strongly Agree* has a value of 5, *Agree* a value of 4, and so forth. For the negative items (1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 22, 23, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 39), reverse scoring is used. The total attitude score is obtained by the following formula: $\text{HAS score} = \frac{(X - N)(100)}{N(4)}$, where $X$ is the total of the scored responses and $N$ is the number of items properly completed. This formula standardizes scores such that they may range from 0 to 100; higher scores indicate a more positive attitude about genital herpes and coping with genital herpes.

**Reliability**

To measure internal consistency (split-half reliability), 148 undergraduate students in psychology and health education classes completed the scale. Reliability was high (Cronbach’s alpha = .91; Bruce & McLaughlin, 1986; Bruce & Bullins, 1989).

**Validity**

Content and face validity were evaluated by a panel of five expert judges: a physician, a registered nurse, two health educators, and a graduate student with herpes. The judges assessed the relevance and importance of each item as well as the comprehensiveness of the entire scale (Bruce & McLaughlin, 1986).

**References**


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Exhibit

**Herpes Attitude Scale**

*Instructions:* For each of the following 40 statements, please note on the answer sheet whether you agree or disagree with the statements. Use the following scale:

- **SA:** Strongly Agree With the Statement
- **A:** Agree With the Statement
- **N:** Neither Agree nor Disagree With the Statement
- **D:** Disagree With the Statement
- **SD:** Strongly Disagree With the Statement

Each statement is numbered. Be sure to match the statement’s number with the number on the answer sheet. Please respond to all items on the questionnaire. There are NO right or wrong answers.

1. The thought of genital herpes is disgusting.
2. I would not feel dirty if I got genital herpes.
3. Genital herpes is not as scary as most people believe.
4. There are a lot of diseases that are worse than genital herpes.
5. People give genital herpes to others for revenge.
6. I could cope with having genital herpes.
7. If I had a roommate with genital herpes, I would move out.
8. Only bad people catch genital herpes.
9. I feel comfortable around friends who have genital herpes.
10. You can tell that someone has genital herpes just by looking at them.
11. I am pretty sure that I could handle having genital herpes if I caught it.
12. Having genital herpes is really no worse than having cold sores.
13. People who have genital herpes are looked down on.
14. I do not like to use public restrooms because I might catch genital herpes there.
15. I could remain calm if I found out that I had gotten genital herpes.
16. A person who has genital herpes got what s/he deserves.
17. If I had genital herpes, I would tell a potential sex partner.
18. There is more to a person who has genital herpes than the fact that s/he has genital herpes.
19. I would not avoid a friend if I found out that s/he had genital herpes.
20. I would consider marrying someone who has genital herpes.
21. People who have genital herpes should be treated the same as anyone else.
22. I would feel self-conscious if I got genital herpes.
23. If I found out that my sexual partner had genital herpes, I would never speak to him/her again.
24. The “new sexual leprosy” is an inappropriate term for genital herpes.
25. Catching genital herpes would not be the worst thing that could happen to me.
26. I would not be ashamed if I got genital herpes.
27. People who have genital herpes are worth getting to know.
28. Genital herpes is a manageable disease.
29. I think that people who have genital herpes are too sexually active.
30. If I caught genital herpes, I would consider suicide.
31. People who have genital herpes should never have sex again.
32. I would be embarrassed to tell anyone if I had genital herpes.
33. Only unclean people catch genital herpes.
34. If I got genital herpes, no one would want to marry me.
35. If I got genital herpes, I would not want to have children.
36. Everyone would know if I got genital herpes.
37. People who have genital herpes are promiscuous.
38. I could discuss genital herpes with my parents.
39. If I asked a friend a question about genital herpes, s/he would think that I had genital herpes.
40. I would date a person known to have genital herpes.