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Qualitative study of clinicians' experience with rating of the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) scale

**Introduction:** The GAF is a worldwide known rating scale for severity of illness in psychiatry and very much used in research papers. GAF covers the spectrum from positive mental health to severe psychopathology on a 100-points scale (1-100). From systematic literature reviews (Aas 2010; 2011), we know there are problems with GAF, including reliability and validity problems. How good GAF is, is an important question. Systematic literature searches have not identified qualitative studies of clinicians experience with GAF.

**Aims:** To collect information which can play a role in work to improve GAF.

**Methods:** An interview guide (with 28 questions) for qualitative interviews of clinicians was developed, with focus on issues considered important for an improved GAF (Aas 2010; 2011). Purposive sampling is used and sample size decided by saturation. Respondents varies in, for example: profession (psychiatrists, psychologists), experience with diagnostic categories, years of experience from psychiatry, and organization they work for.

**Results:** The qualitative interviews have resulted in a considerable amount of information.

**Conclusions:** Collected information confirms that clinicians have unique experiences of importance for further work towards an improved GAF.

**References:**

Aas IHM. Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF): Properties and frontier of current knowledge. *Annals of General Psychiatry* 2010; 9:20.

Aas IHM. Guidelines for rating Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF). *Annals of General Psychiatry* 2011; 10:2.