

The Social Readjustment Rating Scale

An inventory of common stressors

This Social Readjustment Rating Scale was created by Thomas Holmes & Richard Rahe, University of Washington School of Medicine, in the late 1960s to provide a standardized measure of the impact of a wide range of common stressors.

Using the Scale

To use the scale, simply add up the values for all of the listed life events that have occurred to you within the past year. If a particular event has happened to you more than once within the last 12 months, multiply the value by the number of occurrences. Enter your value total at the end of the list.

The Scale

Each life event is assigned a value in arbitrary “life changing units” chosen to reflect the relative amount of stress the event causes in the population studied. Stress is cumulative, so to estimate the total stress you are experiencing, add up the values corresponding to the events that have occurred in your life over the past year.

Life Event	Value
Death of Spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Jail term	63
Death of close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Fired at work	47
Marital reconciliation	45
Retirement	45
Change in health of family member	44
Pregnancy	40
Sex difficulties	39
Gain of new family member	39
Business readjustment	39
Change in financial state	38

Death of close friend	37
Change to a different line of work	36
Change in number of arguments with spouse	35
Home Mortgage over \$100,000*	31
Foreclosure or mortgage or loan	30
Change in responsibilities at work	29
Son or daughter leaving home	29
Trouble with in-laws	29
Outstanding personal achievement	28
Spouse begins or stops work	26
Begin or end school	26
Change in living conditions	25
Revision of personal habits	24
Trouble with boss	23
Change in work hours or conditions	20
Change in residence	20
Change in schools	20
Change in recreation	19
Change in church activities	19
Change in social activities	18
Mortgage or loan of less than \$100,000*	17
Change in sleeping habits	16
Change in number of family get-togethers	15
Change in eating habits	15
Single person living alone	**
Other- describe	**
Total:	

* the mortgage figure was updated from the original figure of \$10,000 to reflect inflation.

** Estimate the impact on yourself

Interpretation

Interpretation of the overall score is difficult because of the large differences in each person's ability to cope and their particular reactions to stress, but here are some general guidelines.

A total of 150 or less is good, suggesting a low level of stress in your life and a low probability of developing a stress-related disorder. If your score is 300 or more, statistically you stand an almost 80% chance of getting sick in the near future. If your score is 150 to 299, the chances are about 50%. At less than 150, about 30%. This scale seems to suggest that change in one's life requires an effort to adapt and then an effort to regain stability.

About the Scale

The scale is based on the observation that important life changes, whether positive such as marriage or negative, such as death of a close friend all induce stress. Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe developed the scale by listing common stressful events and arbitrarily assigning a value of 50 "life-changing units" to the stress caused by marriage. They then had a large number of men rate the stress caused by the other events in comparison to marriage. The results were combined to create the scale. Studies show a modest correlation between the number of life-changing units experienced in the previous year with a person's health in the present year. Specifically correlations have been shown between SRRS scores and heart attacks, broken bones, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, tuberculosis, complications of pregnancy and birth, decline in academic performance, employee absenteeism, and other difficulties. Although the scale was originally developed and validated using only male subjects it provides useful results with both male and female subjects and it has been validated in Japanese, Latin American, European, and Malaysian populations.

Inherent Variation

The stress caused by a particular stressor varies greatly from one person to the next because of the variability in the circumstances, interpretation, goals, personality, values coping strategy, and resources from one person to the next. Therefore, although this scale is well-researched, the values are only a rough approximation at best.

References

Psychology, Core Concepts, by Phillip G. Zimbardo, Ann L. Weber, Robert L. Johnson

The social readjustment rating scale, Holmes, T. H. and Rahe, R. H. 1967, *Journal of Psychosomatic research*, 11(2), 213-21.