



## WURSS: An Instrument to Measure the Severity and Duration of the Common Cold

**WARF: P01142US**

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**The Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) is seeking commercial partners interested in developing an instrument for measuring the severity and functional impact of the common cold.**

### Overview

Several validated systems exist for measuring the symptoms and severity of human ailments such as diabetes, asthma and heart conditions.

### The Invention

Now, a group of UW-Madison medical researchers has developed an instrument for measuring the severity and functional impact of the common cold. The instrument, called the Wisconsin Upper Respiratory Symptom Survey (WURSS), provides a comprehensive set of questions covering cold symptoms and related quality-of-life outcomes experienced by cold-sufferers.

Long (WURSS-44) and short (WURSS-21) versions are now available. Patients complete the survey – in either electronic or hard-copy form – and the results are analyzed statistically.

The original survey was created using previous scales, expert opinion and common knowledge. It was later expanded and refined based on its use in a randomized trial testing the effectiveness of *Echinacea* as a cold remedy, and through interviews and focus groups with survey participants. The questionnaire measures specific cold symptoms, symptoms clusters (dimensions), functional impact, and global severity.

The WURSS-44 has now undergone formal validity testing. Internal validity is supported by favorable reliability and responsiveness coefficients. External validity is supported by strong associations of WURSS with the SF-8 (a general health instrument) and the Jackson cold scale. Importantly, WURSS is both more comprehensive and more sensitive (better responsiveness) than either comparison instrument. A subset of items have been selected for the short form WURSS-21. More details on validation and item reduction can be obtained from the researchers through the link below.

### Applications

- Studies of cold morbidity by public health officials
- Testing of new cold remedies by pharmaceutical companies

### Key Benefits

- Sensitive, reliable and easy-to-use
- Developed through use in a clinical trial with over 140 participants, and through a qualitative instrument development project involving nearly 75 people
- The WURSS instruments are available in many translations

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## Additional Information

### For More Information About the Inventors

- [Bruce Barrett](#)

### Related Technologies

- [More information about WURSS is available on the researchers' website.](#)
- [To license WURSS for commercial, academic, or nonprofit scholarly purposes, please visit WARF's Express Licensing Portal.](#)

### Publications

- Barrett et al. 2002. The Wisconsin Upper Respiratory Symptom Survey (WURSS) – A New Research Instrument for Assessing the Common Cold. J. Fam. Pract. 51, U5-U15.

### Tech Fields

- [Education & Training : Medical & health](#)

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