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Two screening questions can rule out depression

A recent Alberta Tools for Practice¹ notes that two questions can be used to rule out depression when the answer is no to both questions (this is similar to a negative brain natriuretic peptide (BNP) to rule out congestive heart failure).

If the patient scores positive on either question a more detailed assessment to confirm or refute depression needs to be made (e.g. using the PHQ-9).

The two questions are "During the past month have you often been bothered by:

1. Feeling down, depressed or hopeless?
2. Having little interest or pleasure in doing things?"

Whether screening alters outcomes is debatable, but the 2-question screen may be reasonable for case-finding or screening higher risk patients.

Reference:

1. Alberta Tools for Practice #203. [Click here](#)

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