

Can you describe the Bush-Francis Catatonia Rating Scale? Is it the best way to diagnose? What symptoms are on the scale?

Alyssa Phillips:

There's something called the Bush-Francis Catatonia Rating Scale that is used to diagnose catatonia. Can you describe what that is and whether this is the best way to diagnose catatonia, and what some of the symptoms are that are included on that scale?

Dr. Fink:

In the 1970s, we became aware that catatonia was a syndrome that we could identify. And in England, in Germany, and at Stony Brook, we developed rating scales.

Rating scales are symptoms that you score, and the catatonia rating scale has a zero, one, two, or three. If a patient shows four or more signs of the 23, they are labeled that they have catatonia. To verify the catatonia, to prove that they have it, we have what is called a lorazepam test.

The lorazepam test is the intravenous administration of one or two milligrams of lorazepam. If beforehand they have a score of four or five or six, after lorazepam, half of the items become normal, that lorazepam treats the catatonia. And then high-dose lorazepam will cure or will improve about 80% of our patients.

What we accomplish is if you treat a patient adequately, the response is good. If the patient does not get well with lorazepam in high doses, we recommend ECT.