Directions for Administration of the VA LV VFQ-48

The VA LV VFQ-48 is a self-report questionnaire designed to measure the difficulty a person has performing daily activities. The VA LV VFQ-48 can stand-alone or be used with other data gathering tools. Telephone administration of the questionnaire will take approximately 12 minutes.

Explaining the purpose of the call:

(1) In conjunction with a visit to a rehabilitation center or a low vision appointment:
   “I know you are coming to ______________ in the near future. I would like to ask you some questions so we can determine the activities you may have difficulty performing. This will allow us to identify areas where we can better help you.”

(2) Follow-up call:
   “I’m calling to follow-up on your visit to ______________. I would like to ask you some questions to determine any difficulty you have performing the activities we previously discussed.”

“I will be asking about activities that you may perform daily or on a regular basis. I am interested in how well you are able to do these activities using ordinary glasses or contact lenses, adaptive techniques and low-vision devices (if you have them). Please consider any special methods or devices you use when you select a response to a question.”

Examples of low vision devices and adaptive techniques:

Interviewers must confirm that the patient understands the terms low vision devices and adaptive techniques. Without this awareness, data gathered may not be reliable. The following examples are provided for clarification.

LOW VISION DEVICES:
- Optical aids to make things appear larger
  - Magnifiers
  - Telescopes
- Non-Optical aids to make some tasks less difficult
  - High intensity lamps
  - Large print
- Electronic systems that capture printed material and provide feedback
  - CCTV (large print feedback)

ADAPTIVE TECHNIQUES AND DEVICES:
- Methods using non-visual senses (touch, hearing, smell) to increase independence in performing work, school or other activities.
  - Folding money for easier identification
  - Using a white cane and listening to traffic when crossing the street
  - Scanner (synthesized speech feedback)

Directions reminding the patient to consider low vision device/technique use when responding to the questions are repeated four different times because the patient often forgets the directions and answers as though we are asking about unaided vision.

Explaining the VA LV VFQ-48 Responses:

“I want you to tell me how difficult it may be for you to do the following activities. The task may be NOT difficult, MODERATELY difficult, EXTREMELY difficult or IMPOSSIBLE. You may have trouble performing the task for a reason unrelated to vision loss. Limitations that keep a person from doing an activity for non-visual reasons are important. Some examples include heart conditions, arthritis, using a wheel chair or that you are not interested in performing the task.”
Directions for Scoring the VA LV VFQ-48

Measuring visual ability:
The activities (items) included in the VA LV VFQ-48 range from easy (keep clothes clean) to hard (read small print on package labels). Patients also differ in their visual ability and will find activities (items) to vary in difficulty from NOT difficult to IMPOSSIBLE. There are three steps to computing the composite score: (1) assigning a score for each item, (2) calculating the average item score and (3) using the formula to compute the composite score. Scoring the questionnaire will take approximately 3 minutes.

Assigning a score for each item:
When the respondent answers a question CIRCLE the box that corresponds to the difficulty reported for that activity. For example, a response of moderately difficult (2) is given to the question “How difficult is it to identify medicine?” CIRCLE box (2) that has an item score of 0.51. The 0.51 is then written in the item score box.

A response that falls into the U category indicates the person has non-visual reasons for not doing the task or is not interested in doing the activity. These responses have NO value and are not used for computing average or item scores. If the U box is circled, leave the corresponding item score box empty.

Calculating the average item score:
Total the individual item scores and divide by the number of items scored. Assuming every question is answered, total items scored will be 48 minus the total number of U responses. If a person had 3 responses that were entered in the U column, the average item score for that questionnaire would be the total item score divided by 45.

Average item score = total item scores / (48 – U)

Using the formula to compute the VA LV VFQ-48 composite score:
A scientific calculator or use of a computer spreadsheet program is required to perform the logarithmic calculation. The formula for calculating the score is:

0.9*LN((2.34- average item score) / (average item score+2.22))+0.05

LN is the spreadsheet notation for computing the natural logarithm of a number. This equation is based upon the sample of 367 patients used to develop the questionnaire.

Calculating reading domain score:
To calculate the reading domain score total the individual item scores from the following items:

1. Read newspaper headlines
2. Read newspaper/magazine articles
3. Read mail
4. Read menus
5. Read small print on package labels
6. Keep your place while reading
7. Identify money
8. Read menus
9. Read small print on package labels
10. Identify money
11. Read newspaper headlines
12. Read street signs and store names
13. Read signs
14. Read print on TV
15. Read print on TV
16. Make out a check
17. Sign your name
18. Make out a check
19. Sign your name
20. Keep your place while reading
21. Identify money
22. Take a message
23. Handle finances
24. Make out a check
25. Sign your name
26. Take a message

Average item score = total item score of reading items / (14 – U)

Formula to compute the composite score remains the same

Error messages for average item scores outside the acceptable range:
The acceptable range for average item score is <= 2.34 and >= -2.22. Average item scores outside this acceptable range will result in an error message. The acceptable range will be exceeded when the patient responds:
- NOT DIFFICULT to every item
- IMPOSSIBLE to every item
- EXTREMELY DIFFICULT or IMPOSSIBLE to a large number of easy items
- NOT DIFFICULT to a large number of hard items

When the average item score falls outside the acceptable range the responses are not working together to estimate the patient’s ability. This result usually means something other than visual impairment is governing the patient’s responses preventing a valid measure of the patient’s visual ability.