

Vulnerable Attachment Style Questionnaire (VASQ) scoring
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Introduction

This 22 item questionnaire, validated against the Attachment Style Interview, was originally used to a screen for vulnerable and insecure attachment score in relation to clinical depression in adults or adolescents.

It utilises a **total** score of insecure attachment style and two subscales reflecting **insecurity/mistrust** and **degree of proximity/distance** in relating. Cut-offs have been derived based on median ratings in high risk community women. The VASQ does not derive attachment styles, but the insecurity/mistrust dimension was highly correlated to both Fearful and Angry-dismissive attachment styles and high proximity seeking to Enmeshed styles.

Analysis shows the total score and the insecurity/mistrust scale relate to depression in a study of 262 adolescents and adults. VASQ scores are highly correlated with the RQ scores and have good test-retest reliability.

Higher cut-off scores can be used in different samples to optimise disorder risk. Higher vulnerability in style can be derived from combining insecurity and proximity seeking dimensions (Anxious) and insecurity and low proximity seeking (Avoidant).

Reference

Bifulco, A, Mahon J, Kwon J-H, Moran PM & Jacobs C (2003). The Vulnerable Attachment Style Questionnaire: An interview-derived measure of relationship styles predictive of depression. Psychological Medicine, 33, 1099-1110

Scoring

The items below represent the insecurity/mistrust items (non- highlighted/ italicised) and the proximity-seeking items (highlighted and italicised).

All are rated 5: strongly agree, 4:agree, 3:unsure, 2:disagree or 1: strongly disagree.

Apart from 14 and 15 which are reversed:

5: Strongly disagree, 4: disagree, 3: unsure 2: agree, 1: strongly agree (see overleaf)

Step 1 - reversed scoring (items 14 and 15): change the scoring so that 1=Strongly agree and 5=strong disagree.

Step 2 - Total scale (vulnerable) attachment style = sum of all items, Add up the individual scores for each questionnaire (number 1-22), making sure first you reverse the scoring for question 14 and 15.

The total score gives you vulnerability of attachment style - **cut-off 57¹** or more indicates a high level of vulnerable attachment style.

Step 3 – Level of insecurity/mistrust of style (Fearful or Angry-dismissive)

Sum items (non shaded/italicised above) 1,3,5,8,9,10,12,17,18,19,20 & 22). Here the **cut-off is 30** or higher. This means high insecurity of attachment.

Step 4: Degree of proximity seeking (Enmeshed)

Sum the shaded/yellow items above (2,4,6,7,11,13,14,15,16,21). Here the **cut-off is 27** or more for high level of proximity seeking.

Step 5: Disorganized attachment style

Combination of high insecurity/mistrust (step 3) AND high proximity seeking (step 4).

(This is still in the process of being confirmed through further analysis but does show good association with the parallel interview measure the Attachment Style Interview)

Vulnerable Attachment Style Questionnaire	5 → Strongly agree → 1 Strongly disagree
1. I take my time getting to know people 2. <i>I rely on others to help me make decisions</i> 3. People let me down a lot. 4. <i>I miss the company of others when I am alone.</i> 5. It's best not to get too emotionally close to other people 6. <i>I worry a lot if people I live with arrive back later than expected</i> 7. <i>I usually rely on advice from others when I've got a problem</i> 8. I feel uncomfortable when people get too close to me 9. People close to me often get on my nerves 10. I feel people are against me 11. <i>I worry about things happening to close family and friends</i> 12. I often get into arguments. 13. <i>I am clingy with others.</i> 14. <i>I look forward to spending time on my own (Reverse score)</i> 15. <i>I like making decisions on my own. (Reverse score))</i> 16. <i>I get anxious when people close to me are away</i> 17. I feel uneasy when others confide in me. 18. I find it hard to trust others. 19. Having people around me can be a nuisance. 20. I feel people haven't done enough for me. 21. <i>It's important to have people around me.</i> 22. I find it difficult to confide in people.	

¹ Note, there is an error on table 3 (pg 1106) of published paper.. The correct cut-off should be >=57 as indicated on table 2.

Alternative Scoring of reduced VASQ² (Kupeli et al 2014).

Abstract The Vulnerable Attachment Style Questionnaire (VASQ; Bifulco et al., Psychological Medicine, 33, 1099–1110, 2003) was developed to assess adult attachment as a vulnerability factor for developing depression and identified two subscales, insecure attachment and proximity-seeking. The present study sought to confirm and further validate the factor structure of the VASQ in a large community convenience sample. The VASQ was completed by a large sample of men and women (N=1236) as part of an online survey. The data were randomly split to allow both independent exploratory (EFA) and confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to be conducted. A four-factor model consisting of two types of proximity-seeking (lack of autonomy and anxious-dependent) and insecurity (ambivalent and avoidant dismissive) attachment patterns proved to be the best-fitting measurement model in this sample ($\chi^2=186.7$, $df=71$, $p<.001$; CFI=.945, TLI=.929, RMSEA=.05). Although similar to the original questionnaire, the new factor structure resulted in the elimination of several items. Validity was confirmed with the shortened VASQ as similar associations with mood, stress, eating pathology and sex were observed for both the new shortened VASQ and original version of the VASQ. The structure of the VASQ was broadly consistent with the original solution although some items were removed and both subscales were further split into two sub-factors. Future research should use this tool in clinical and nonclinical groups to provide further support for its factor structure and to determine the clinical and theoretical usefulness of the different subscales. The VASQ is reduced to 14 items. Using the criteria outlined above, items 1 (“I take my time getting to know people”), 3 (“People let me down a lot”), 9 (“People close to me often get on my nerves”) and 17 (“I feel uneasy when others confide in me”) from the original Insecurity scale and items 4 (“I miss the company of others when I am alone”), 14 (“I look forward to spending time on my own”) and 21 (“Its important to have people around me”) from the Proximity-seeking scale were excluded. Based on the four factor structure, items 3, 4, 17 and 21 were removed as their factor loadings were weak (<.40) while items 1, 9 and 14 were eliminated due to both weak factor loadings (<.40) and double loadings thus limiting their interpretation.

1. ~~I take my time getting to know people~~
2. *I rely on others to help me make decisions*
3. ~~People let me down a lot.~~
4. ~~I miss the company of others when I am alone.~~
5. *It's best not to get too emotionally close to other people*
6. *I worry a lot if people I live with arrive back later than expected*
7. *I usually rely on advice from others when I've got a problem*
8. *I feel uncomfortable when people get too close to me*
9. ~~People close to me often get on my nerves~~
10. *I feel people are against me*
11. *I worry about things happening to close family and friends*
12. *I often get into arguments.*
13. *I am clingy with others.*
14. ~~I look forward to spending time on my own (Reverse score)~~
15. *I like making decisions on my own. (Reverse score)*
16. *I get anxious when people close to me are away*
17. ~~I feel uneasy when others confide in me.~~
18. *I find it hard to trust others.*
19. *Having people around me can be a nuisance.*
20. *I feel people haven't done enough for me.*
21. ~~It's important to have people around me.~~
22. *I find it difficult to confide in people.*

² Kupeli, N, Norton, S, Chilcot K, Schmidt U, Campbell C & Troop N (2014) A confirmatory factor analysis and validation of the Vulnerable Attachment Style Questionnaire. Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioural Assessment. DOI 10.1007/s10862-014-9432-3

Factor analysis – 4 factor solution

Factor		1	2	3	4	Communalities
		Lack autonomy	Avoidant- dismissive	Anxious Dependent	Ambi- valent	
	Lack of Autonomy/ Dependent					
2	I rely on others to help me make decisions	.83				
7	I usually rely on advice from others when I've got a problem	.67				
15	I like making decisions on my own ^a	.54				
	Avoidant dismissive					
5	It's best not to get too emotionally close to other people		.63			.35
8	I feel uncomfortable when people get too close to me		.75			.29
18	I find it hard to trust others		.65			.37
19	Having people around me can be a nuisance		.51			.40
22	I find it difficult to confide in people		.63			.23
	Anxious dependent					
6	I worry a lot if people I live with arrive back later than expected			.67		
11	I worry about things happening to close family and friends			.57		
16	I get anxious when people close to me are away			.68		.49
	Ambivalent					
10	I feel people are against me		.43	.26		.69
12	I often get into arguments		.24	.23		.55
13	I am clingy with others [†]	.29		.38		.57
20	I feel people haven't done enough for me		.33			.62
	Eigen value	3.84	2.31	1.43	1.16	

Coefficients of .25 or over shown

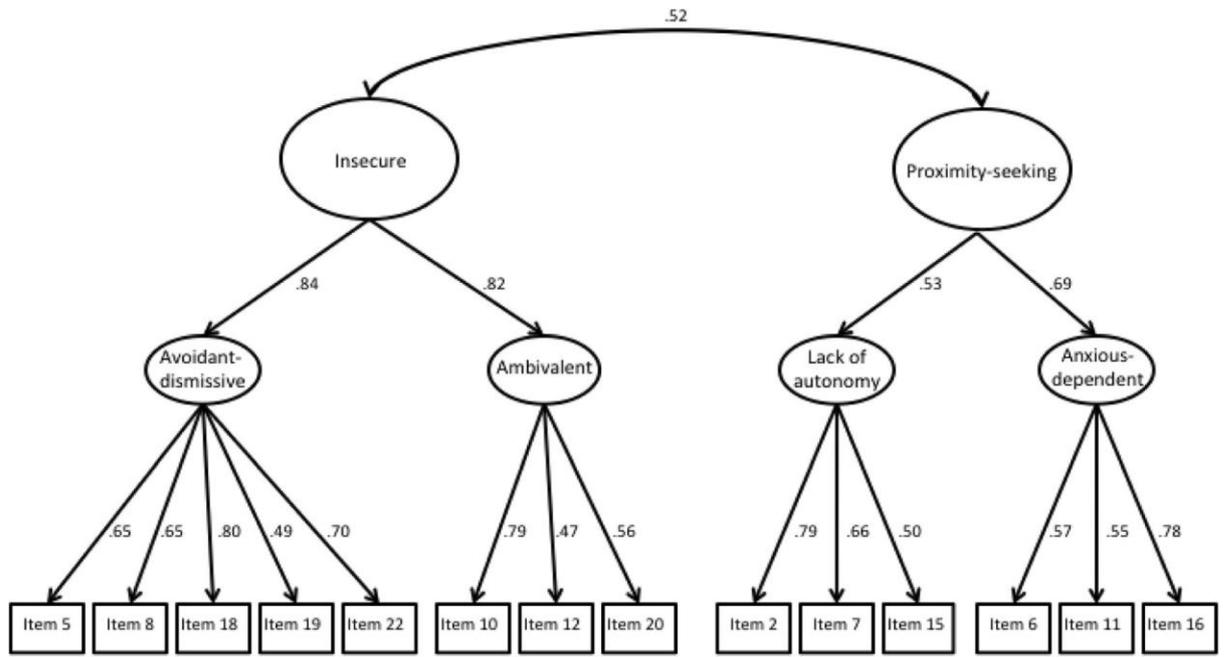


Diagram showing item link to 4 factor structure, in turn linked to the original two factor.