



Identifying and Validating a Public Mental Health Outcome Set

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About the research

What were the aims of the research?

The aim of this project was to identify a set of outcome measures suitable for use in evaluative public mental health research.

Why do we need a public mental health outcome set?

- To evaluate public mental health interventions and track public mental health over time, validated outcome measures are needed.
- A 'core outcome set' is an agreed, standardised set of outcome measures and allows for research findings across studies to be compared.
- Despite progress in developing core outcome sets across other areas of public health, a set is yet to be developed for public mental health.
- The purpose of the current project was to identify unambiguous outcomes of public mental health, to enable their use to study the effects of exposures and interventions.

What did we do?

Stakeholder consultation

- We ran stakeholder consultations involving members of the public, public mental health practitioners, commissioners and researchers to establish which domains of public mental health to focus on.
- Four domains of public mental health were identified and feasible to progress. These were wellbeing, social connectedness, civic participation, and resilience.

Further information

For more information on this research, please see the SPHR website at:

https://nihrspwr.link/pmh_outcome_set

Contact the researchers

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About the School

The NIHR School for Public Health Research is a partnership between the Universities of Sheffield; Bristol; Cambridge; Imperial; and University College London; The London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM); LiLaC – a collaboration between the Universities of Liverpool and Lancaster; and Fuse - The Centre for Translational Research in Public Health a collaboration between Newcastle, Durham, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside Universities.

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Key findings	Domains of public mental health				
	Wellbeing	Social connectedness	Civic participation	Resilience	
Working definition	Measures that assess the positive aspects of mental health (e.g., life satisfaction)	Measures of subjective views, perceptions, or experiences (e.g., feelings of inclusion, belonging, loneliness, isolation, perceived adequacy of social support)	Measures covering attitudes, perceptions, and feelings about contributing to civic and community life through volunteering, political participation, and different forms of community action	Measures of resilience as an attribute or resource. This conceptualises resilience as personal “attributes or situational resources that are deemed helpful in the event that someone experiences hardship”	
Number of studies screened/included - identification of measures	5473 papers screened 29 papers included	2396 papers screened 32 papers included	Absence of review level data – progressed straight to stage 2 searches	4139 papers screened 40 included in review	
Number of studies screened/included - evaluation of measures	1424 papers screened 15 papers included	6218 papers screened 22 papers included	1874 papers screened 0 included in review	N/A	
Number of suitable measures identified	5 measures of wellbeing	10 measures of social connectedness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 assessed feelings of loneliness 4 focused on perceived social support 	0 measures suitable for inclusion	103 potentially suitable measures of resilience. Following further web searches, 19 measures which included items which conceptualised resilience as an attribute or resource were identified.	
Key Findings	Strongest evidence found for The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) - fulfilled 15/18 of the quality assessment criteria All measures were found to have good evidence of reliability A lack of evidence for the ability of measures to detect changes in wellbeing over time	Loneliness UCLA loneliness scale (version 3) fulfilled the most quality assessment criteria (12/18) Evidence of content validity was considerably lacking across measures No evidence of responsiveness to change over time identified for any measures	Social support Strongest evidence found for F-SozU K-6 measure (12/18) SPS-10 and SPS-5 Fulfilled 11/18 criteria No evidence of content validity or responsiveness to change over time	2 potential measures of civic participation initially identified, however neither showed evidence of being validated in relevant populations	Due to the high volume of measures identified, a second stage search to identify evidence on reliability and validity of measures was not feasible

- Further evaluation of psychometric properties in general adult populations is required. In particular, there was a lack of evidence identified for the content validity of measures.
- There needs to be further scoping of the conceptual underpinnings of domains and greater consistency in the use of language and terminology applied.
- The lack of measures identified in relation to some domains, such as civic participation, suggests that more targeted searches may be required to uncover potentially suitable measures. Further primary research may need to be conducted to support the development of measures addressing the subjective experience
- Further work is required to identify measures relating to the domains of public mental health not fully addressed in this project. Due to the range and scope of the literature, it was not feasible to identify and assess psychometric properties of measures of resilience, mental illness, and work-life balance

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