

# **Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6)**

by **Melissa Moran**

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The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6) is an abbreviated version of the K10, widely used measure for either screening or severity. Due to the K6's brevity and consistency across sub-samples, it is preferred when screening for mood or anxiety disorders. Four questions are not used in the K6: the 'tired out for no good reason' question and three of the 'if not none of the time' questions were eliminated.

## **Author**

[R.C. Kessler](#)

## **To Access this Instrument**

[Self-Administered Kessler Psychological Distress Scale \(K6\)](#)

## **Reliability and Validity**

After the K6 was used in two of the largest ongoing national health tracking surveys in the U.S. (the CDC Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance Survey and the SAMHSA National Household Survey), other countries began studying the validity of the K6. All of these studies concluded that the K6 is found to be consistent when used in multiple surveys, the K6 performed just as well as the K10. The K6 has also been proved to have little bias in regards to education and sex.

## **Administration, Analysis and Reporting**

Statistics Solutions consists of a team of professional methodologists and statisticians that can assist the student or professional researcher in administering the survey instrument, collecting the data, conducting the analyses and explaining the results.

For additional information on these services, [click here](#).

## **Dissertations that have used the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale**

Weiss, Jonathan A., Lunskey, Yona. 1 August 2011. *The Brief Family Distress Scale: A measure of Crisis in Caregivers of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders*. (York University).

Vigod, Simone Natalie. 2011. Depression, Psychological Distress and Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening: A Population-Based Study in Ontario Women. (University of Toronto).

## **References**

Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2007-08. *Information Paper: Use of Kessler Psychological Distress Scale in ABS Health Surveys*, Australia.

Beaks, Janette and Mitchell, Christina M., September 2011. *The Utility of the Kessler Screening Scale for Psychological Distress (K6) in Two American Indian Communities*. (University of Colorado, Denver).

International J Methods Psychiatric Research. June 2010. *Supplement: Screening for Serious Mental Illness*. Volume 19, Issue Supplement S1.

R. C. Kessler, G. Andrews, L. J. Colpe, E. Hiripi, D. K. Mroczek, S. L. T. Normand, E. E. Walkters and A. M. Zaslavsky. 2002. *Short Screening Scales to Monitor Population Prevalences and Trends in Non-Specific Psychological Distress*. Cambridge University Press.

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