

Psychometric Properties of the Mental Health Help-Seeking Scale Among Nursing Students

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Introduction

Mental health concerns are common among college students and may be especially prevalent among nursing students due to demanding, rigorous academic education. Nursing students tend to experience anxiety and depression. Despite the mental health challenges many nursing students face, they tend to not seek psychiatric help. Recognizing factors that influence help-seeking behaviors is crucial for developing interventions that support student's physical, mental, and academic success.

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Purpose

Almogheer et al. (2026) developed and evaluated the Mental Health Help-Seeking Scale (MHSS) to determine if it is reliable to measure nursing students' intentions to seek professional mental health services.

Design

This study employed an online cross-sectional survey design to survey 148 undergraduate and graduate nursing students. Students completed the MHSS, the Adverse Childhood Experiences questionnaire, and the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale. Researchers then evaluated the reliability and validity of the MHSS.

Results

The MHHSS was based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, which suggests that the intention to engage in a behavior is caused by attitudes towards a behavior, how a person sees the behavior as normal (i.e., subjective norms), and the extent to which a person considers that they are in control of the behavior (i.e., perceived behavioral control). Researchers found that the MHHSS is reliable and measures four distinct factors that are consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior. These four factors explained 83.2% of the total variance in responses.

The scale also demonstrated good validity. Students with higher MHHSS scores also reported greater psychological distress and more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), providing evidence that the scale measures help-seeking beliefs and intentions in a theoretically expected way.

Overall, the findings suggest that the MHHSS is a reliable and valid tool for measuring nursing students' mental health help-seeking attitudes, beliefs, and intentions.

Conclusion

Mental health concerns are common among nursing students, yet many do not seek psychiatric care when needed. The findings of this study suggest that the MHHSS is a reliable and valid tool for measuring nursing students' attitudes and intentions toward seeking mental health care. Nurse educators and academic programs may use this tool to better understand students' help-seeking behaviors, identify potential barriers to care, and support the development of interventions that promote mental health and well-being.