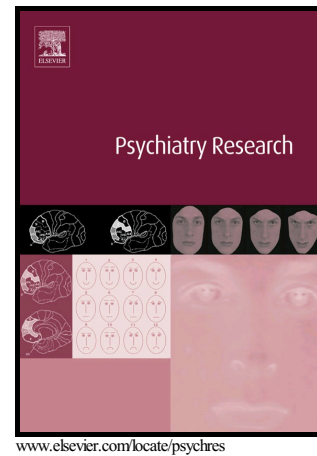


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Development and community-based validation of eight item banks to assess mental health

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Abstract

There is a need for precise but brief screening of mental health problems in a range of settings. The development of item banks to assess depression and anxiety has resulted in new adaptive and static screeners that accurately assess severity of symptoms. However, expansion to a wider array of mental health problems is required. The current study developed item banks for eight mental health problems: social anxiety disorder, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, adult attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, drug use, psychosis and suicidality. The item banks were calibrated in a population-based Australian adult sample (N=3,175) by administering large item pools (45-75 items) and excluding items on the basis of local dependence or measurement non-invariance. Item Response Theory parameters were estimated for each item bank using a two-parameter graded response model. Each bank consisted of 19-47 items, demonstrating excellent fit and precision across a range of -1 to 3 standard deviations from the mean. No previous study has developed such a broad range of mental health item banks. The calibrated item banks will form the basis of a new system of static and adaptive measures to screen for a broad array of mental health problems in the community.

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