Guide to Finding Existing Measures

Conducting research does not always mean starting from scratch, especially when it comes to determining appropriate measures for your study. If you have an idea and/or interest concerning specific clinical outcomes, there is a good chance that someone else has already designed and established a tool to measure it! The following is a suggested guideline to help start this investigative and essential process of research.

1. Conduct a comprehensive literature review on your topic/area of interest.
   a. If affiliated with a university and/or hospital library consult the institution’s available databases and catalogues. Several other databases are also available, (see website list & references).
   b. Thorough key word searches should include several related terms alone and in combinations (e.g., “Children coping in the hospital” may yield fewer results than, “child and hospital”, or “coping and child and ill”)
   c. Utilize an “ancestral” approach and consult the reference lists of key texts and articles to further expand your resources.

2. Choose how you would like to operationally define your variables of interest. For example if you are measuring child adjustment to hospitalization, how will you define adjustment?
   a. Remember there are lots of definitions out there for psychosocial constructs, you are not necessarily looking for the “correct” definition, but rather the one that best fits your overall study.
   b. Include in your definition your intended respondent. Will your variables be child, parent, sibling, and/or staff report?
   c. Consider additional measures that may strengthen your study (e.g., collecting demographics, and physiological responses).
3. Focus your continuing literature review to investigate other similar studies and relevant areas of research to see what tools others have used to measure the same variables. Be sure that these measures match your definition and overall theoretical base of your intended study.
   a. These studies should provide both a discussion of the instrument and potential strengths and limitations of the specific instruments and administering techniques.
   b. You should also refer to the reference list for further descriptions and the original article that establishes the validity, reliability, and other psychometric properties of the measure.
   c. When possible contact the author(s) for further information.

4. Obtain the actual measures! You can access these through handbooks and directories, computerized data bases, direct author contact, and test publishers.
   a. Be sure to set a realistic time line for researching, obtaining, and implementing your selected measures within your overall study framework.
   b. Utilize a team approach and collaborate with other professionals to help distribute the labor involved.

**Handbooks of Measures**


General Information and Measurement Retrieval Websites

- [http://www.childlife.org/Information_Central/AccessingResearch.html](http://www.childlife.org/Information_Central/AccessingResearch.html)


- Behavioral Measurement Database Services, Health and Psychosocial Instruments (HaPI), a computerized database that consists of more than 60,000 records describing tests, questionnaires, checklists, interview schedules, and other types of measures used in the health and psychosocial sciences. By creating an organized resource of previously unavailable measurement information, HAPI: (a) provides a means of locating a variety of instruments, (b) helps to reduce inefficiency and cost, and (c) eliminates duplication and "reinvention of the wheel.".

  [http://www.library.pitt.edu/articles/database_info/hapi_health.html](http://www.library.pitt.edu/articles/database_info/hapi_health.html)


- Buros Institute of Mental Measurements, publishers of Mental Measurements Yearbook and Tests in Print, [www.unl.edu.buros/](http://www.unl.edu.buros/)

- Child-Adult Medical Procedure Interaction Scale (CAMPIS) and Child-Adult Medical Procedure Interaction Scale-Revised (CAMPIS-R), (author’s website) [http://www.uga.edu/psychology/faculty/rblount.html](http://www.uga.edu/psychology/faculty/rblount.html)

- Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), [www.cinahl.org](http://www.cinahl.org)

- Patient-Reported Outcome and Quality of Life Instruments Database (PROQOLID), [www.proqolid.org/](http://www.proqolid.org/).

- PubMed, a service of the National Library of Medicine, [www.pubmed.gov](http://www.pubmed.gov)

- The Test Collection at ETS [www.ets.org/testcoll/index.html](http://www.ets.org/testcoll/index.html), is a library of more than 25,000 tests and other measurement devices that makes information on standardized tests and research instruments available to researchers, graduate students, and teachers. Collected from the early 1900s to the present, the Test Collection at ETS is the largest such compilation in the world.

**Selected References**


