

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)

Study Year 28

Fast Track Project Technical Report

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Citation

Instrument

Zimet, G. D., Dahlem, N. W., Zimet, S. G., & Farley, G. K. (1988). The multidimensional scale of perceived social support. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 52(1), 30-41. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa5201_2

Report

McCabe, G. and Godwin, J. (2022). Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Fast Track Project Technical Report). Available from the Fast Track Project website: <http://www.fasttrackproject.org>

Measure Description

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) test is a 12-item measure developed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley (1988) designed to measure perceptions of support from three sources: family, friends, and a significant other. It identifies how easy or hard it is for the respondent to seek help and support from these three sources. Across many studies, the MSPSS has been shown to have good internal and test-retest reliability, good validity, and a fairly stable factorial structure.

Unscored Dataset Name c28fj
Score Data Name MPS28

Report Sample

This report provides descriptive statistics for the cohort 1 normative sample (original n=387). In addition, this report compares the means and frequencies for two additional samples: the high-risk control sample from cohort 1 (n=155) and the non-high-risk normative sample from cohort 1 (n=308). The non-high-risk normative sample excludes the high-risk normative participants who are also a part of the high-risk control sample (n=79). In year 28, 288 cohort 1 normative participants, 104 high-risk-control cohort 1 participants and 234 non-high-risk normative participants completed at least part of the survey. The MSPSS measure was completed by 285 normative participants, 103 high-risk control participants, and 232 non-high-risk normative participants in year 28.

Scaling

The MSPSS measure contains three domains: perceived social support from family ($n = 4$, items 3, 4, 8, 11), perceived social support from friends ($n = 4$, items 6, 7, 9, 12), and perceived social support from a significant other ($n = 4$, items 1, 2, 5, 10). Items are given as statements, and respondents rate the statements based on their lives on a seven-point scale from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater perceived social support.

c28fj01	MPS: There is a special person who is around when I am in need.
c28fj02	MPS: There is a special person with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.
c28fj03	MPS: My family really tries to help me.
c28fj04	MPS: I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.

c28fj05	MPS: I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me.
c28fj06	MPS: My friends really try to help me.
c28fj07	MPS: I can count on my friends when things go wrong.
c28fj08	MPS: I can talk about my problems with my family.
c28fj09	MPS: I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.
c28fj10	MPS: There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.
c28fj11	MPS: My family is willing to help me make decisions.
c28fj12	MPS: I can talk about my problems with my friends.

A total mean score was created by averaging all 12 items in the measure (mps28tot). Total scores within the range of 1-3 represent low social support, total scores within the range of 3-5 represent medium social support, and total scores with the range of 5-7 represent high social support. MSPSS total scores have demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = .96$)

Three sub-scales were also created by averaging across the items within each of the 3 domains (mps28fam, mps28fri, mps28sgn).

Scales	Items	Description
mps28fam	c28fj03, 04, 08, 11	MPS28 Perceived Support from Family Mean Subscale
mps28fri	c28fj06, 07, 08, 12	MPS28 Perceived Support from Friends Mean Subscale
mps28sgn	c28fj01, 02, 05, 10	MPS28 Perceived Support from Significant Other Mean Subscale
mps28tot	c28fj01-12	MPS28 Perceived Social Support Total Mean Scale

Descriptive Statistics

Full Normative Sample:

		Full Normative Sample					
		Cronbach's alpha	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
mps28fam	Perceived Support from Family	0.94	285	5.07	1.85	1	7
mps28fri	Perceived Support from Friends	0.92	285	5.14	1.76	1	7
mps28sgn	Perceived Support from Significant Other	0.97	285	5.44	1.89	1	7
mps28tot	Perceived Social Support Total Score	0.96	285	5.21	1.62	1	7

Comparison of Non-High Risk Normative and High Risk Control Samples

There is no evidence of statistically significant differences between the high-risk control sample and the non-high-risk normative sample across the MSPSS scales.

		Non-High Risk Normative			High Risk Control			t-test Results*		
		N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	DF	t /chi sq	pval
mps28fam	Perceived Support from Family	232	5.07	1.85	103	4.96	1.92	333	0.52	0.61
mps28fri	Perceived Support from Friends	232	5.09	1.78	103	4.95	1.98	333	0.65	0.52
mps28sgn	Perceived Support from Significant Other	232	5.41	1.94	103	5.23	1.93	333	0.81	0.42
mps28tot	Perceived Social Support Total Score	232	5.19	1.64	103	5.05	1.73	333	0.74	0.46

*If the null hypothesis of equal variances is rejected, the t-test estimates shown in the table assume unequal variances, otherwise the t-test results shown assume equal variances.