

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS IN THE SWISS GENERAL POPULATION



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Psychological distress is frequent in the general population as well as in populations with specific diseases.

We aimed to

- 1) present **reliability of the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI)** for Switzerland,
- 2) develop a **Swiss T-standardization**, and
- 3) **describe psychological distress and characteristics associated with distress** in the Swiss general population.

Aims



Sample:

- Representative sample of the **Swiss general population (N=1238)** completed the BSI; (58.2% female, mean age=48.9 years, range 18-76 years) (from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office [SFSO])

Procedure:

- Questionnaire survey: Invitation and questionnaire sent by University; 1 reminder

Method



Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI):

- 9 scales (see figure) and a Global Severity Index (GSI).
- Raw scores were T-standardized.
- Participants were considered *cases with significant psychological distress* if they reached T≥63 on two scales, or T≥63 on GSI.

We also assessed **sociodemographic information** in the questionnaire.

Measurement of psychological distress



	Unweighted		Weighted	
	N	%	N	%
Sex (from SFSO)				
Male	513	41.8	482	39.2
Female	725	58.2	518	41.8
Age				
18-25	57	4.6	53	4.3
26-35	148	11.9	174	14.1
36-45	212	17.1	209	16.9
46-55	287	23.2	274	22.1
56-65	237	19.1	174	14.1
66-75	222	18.0	149	12.0
Education				
Compulsory schooling	96	7.7	82	6.6
Vocational training	163	13.1	165	13.3
Upper secondary education	294	23.7	243	19.6
University education (incl. Master)	725	58.5	720	58.1
Employment				
Unemployed	148	12.0	180	14.5
Employed	835	67.3	717	57.7
Retired	222	18.0	153	12.3
Language				
German	810	65.4	724	58.5
French	267	21.6	223	18.0
Italian	68	5.5	56	4.5
Migration background				
Non	970	78.4	703	56.5
Migration background	268	21.7	297	23.9
Civil Status (missing imputed from SFSO)				
Never	379	30.6	147	11.8
Married	643	51.9	510	41.1
Divorced or widowed	196	15.8	142	11.4

Sample description (N=1238)



Psychological distress is prevalent in the Swiss general population, particularly among young people and those with lower education.

Conclusion

Easy access to psychological support and/or therapy might help people to more easily get adequate help.

Reliability and Swiss standardization

The reliability of the scales was good (Cronbach's α between 0.669 and 0.954).

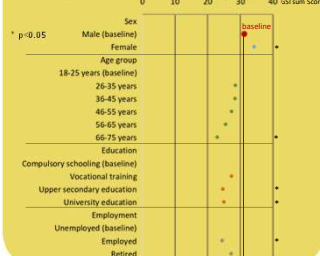
A Swiss T-standardization for the representative sample was developed with a mean T=50 and standard deviation (SD)=10.

A total of 18.1% participants (CI: 16.0-20.5) were considered cases with psychological distress



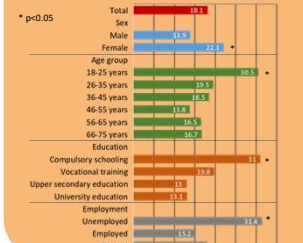
Predictors of higher distress

Males, older people, those with higher education and employed people report lower distress (based on multivariable linear regression).



Predictors of caseness

More females, people with lower education, with compulsory schooling only and unemployed participants were considered cases with psychological distress.



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