

Mental Health Inventory - 38 (MHI – 38)

General Information

The Mental Health Inventory - 38 (MHI – 38) is a consumer self report tool designed to measure general psychological distress and well-being in the RAND Health Insurance Experiment (Veil & Ware, 1983), a study designed to estimate the effects of different health care financing arrangements on the demand for services as well as on the health status of the patients in the study. The RAND research group developed the MHI alongside another measure (SF-36) used widely in population general health surveys. A number of questions were taken directly from the MHI to make up the mental health subscale of the SF-36. These five items have also been used as a free-standing scale in their own right, known as the MHI-5.

Reflecting its roots in measurement in the general population, the measure includes positive aspects of well-being (such as cheerfulness, interest in and enjoyment of life) as well as negative aspects of mental health (e.g. anxiety and depression). The MHI can be completed either as a self-report measure or as part of an interview.

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