

Name of Measure: Life Distress Inventory (LDI) (Thomas, Yoshioka, & Ager, 1994)

Purpose of Measure: To measure self-reported distress across areas of social life and functioning

Author(s) of Abstract:

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Reference: Yoshioka, M., & Shibusawa, T. (in press). The Life Distress Inventory: A psychometric examination. *Research on Social Work Practice*.

Description of measure: The Life Distress Inventory (LDI) is an 18-item rapid assessment inventory (RAI) of subjective distress across various areas of social life and functioning. Thomas, Yoshioka, and Ager (1994) originally developed this measure for clinical use with spouses of problem drinkers. Drawing upon clinical experience with alcoholic families and pilot testing with a sample of 24 spouses, 18 items which assess subjective distress were identified. Respondents are asked to report how much distress they are currently experiencing in each of the 18 item areas. The introductory paragraph to the measure reads:

This scale is intended to estimate your current level of distress with each of the eighteen areas of your life listed below. Please circle one of the numbers (1-7) beside each area. Numbers toward the left ends of the seven-unit scale indicated higher levels of distress, while numbers toward the right end of the scale indicate lower levels of distress. Try to concentrate on how distressed you currently feel about each area. Please circle one number for each item.

Respondents then indicate categories that range from 'no distress' (1) to 'the most distress' (7). The items are a list of 18 categories including aspects of social life, relationships, and functioning (e.g., Marriage, Household management, Expectations for future). Total scale scores can range from 18-126. Higher scores denote greater distress

The LDI has been since examined with a sample of healthy, non-clinical adults. Based on this sample, a factor analysis was conducted. It resulted in the development of four sub-scales: Social functioning, Life satisfaction, Finances and employment, and Marital distress.

Language Availability: English only.

Translation Comments: N/A.

Description of Asian Population: Thirty three healthy adults recruited into a medical study of body composition (i.e., the measurement of bone composition, water and mineral content) conducted in a large city in the northeastern United States. Participants were identified only in terms of race (e.g. Asian). These Asian adults were 41 years old (s.d. 21 years) on average, 45.5% were men and 54.5% were women.

Norms:

Average Item Means (Standard Deviations) for LDI sub-scales

Group	LDI Social Funct *	LDI life Satisf *	LDI marital Distress*	LDI financial distress	LDI Total**
Asian (n=33)	1.17 (.54)	1.97 (.96)	1.46(1.14)	2.35 (1.50)	1.57 (.65)
White (n= 44-45)	1.64 (.77)	2.41 (1.09)	1.56 (1.17)	2.99 (1.73)	2.00 (.85)
Black (n = 39-40)	1.67 (.73)	2.49 (1.14)	2.08 (1.32)	3.40 (1.59)	2.16 (.82)
Hispanic (n = 33-35)	1.75 (1.07)	3.03 (1.36)	2.34 (1.49)	3.12 (1.80)	2.34 (1.07)
Other (n = 26)	1.59 (.82)	2.50 (1.32)	1.51 (1.24)	3.33 (1.65)	2.03 (.83)
Total (n=176-178)	1.58 (.82)	2.48 (1.20)	1.80 (1.31)	3.03 (1.68)	2.02 (.88)

p < .05 ** p < .01

Post hoc testing shows that Asians scored significantly lower than Hispanic respondents in terms of marital distress, life satisfaction, social functioning (p < .05) and total LDI (p < .01). Asians significantly scored lower than Black respondents in terms of total LDI score (p < .05). No other inter group differences were statistically significant

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each of the sub-scale and the total inventory based on the responses of the healthy, normal weight adults. The reliability coefficients for the LDI sub-scales and total inventory were as follows: Social Functioning (8 items)=.87; Life Satisfaction (5 items)=.82; Finance and Employment (2 items)=.77; and Marital Distress (3 items)=.80; and Total LDI (18 items)=.89. The mean of the inter-item correlation was .47 with a range of .27 to .66.

Validity: The LDI sub-scales and total scores were correlated with the convergent factors (depression, anxiety, life satisfaction, quality of life) in the hypothesized direction at statically significant levels. It was anticipated that individuals reporting higher levels of distress would be more likely to report higher levels of depression. Along this same vein, it was expected also that these individuals would report lower levels of life satisfaction. Finally, it was expected that individuals reporting higher levels of distress would report also a lower quality of life as assessed by social functioning. The strength of these coefficients ranged from .23 to .61 with a mean of .43. LDI sub-scale and total scores were unrelated to the discriminant factors (spine length, head circumference) as hypothesized.

Reference to original instrument:

Thomas, E. J., Yoshioka, M. R., & Ager, R. D. (1994). Life Distress Inventory. In J. Fischer & Corcoran (Eds.), Measures of clinical practice: A sourcebook (2nd ed.). (pp.267). New York, NY: Free Press.

How to obtain a copy of the instrument: Contact Marianne Yoshioka, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Columbia University School of Social Work, 622 West 113th Street, New York, NY 10025 (212)-854-5669. Mry5@columbia.edu