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The BEHAVIORAL MEASUREMENTS Letter

Behavioral Measurement Database Services

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Enriching the health and behavioral sciences by broadening instrument access

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VOL. 1, No. 1
FALL 1993

HaPI: A Unique Resource for Measurement Information

How is happiness measured? Is there a way to measure young children's ability to cope with stress? What tools are available to assess cognitive functioning in the elderly? How can physicians, nurses, and other health professionals assess chronic pain in their patients? Now there is finally a single, interdisciplinary, comprehensive resource for finding the instruments you need: the Health and Psychosocial Instruments (HaPI) database.

HaPI, available online through BRS (an international vendor of databases) and now available as a CD-ROM, contains over 18,000 records relevant to psychologists, physicians, nurses, social workers, educators, evaluators, sociologists, administrators, other health and behavioral scientists, and students. From widely recognized to obscure and unpublished, these instruments include questionnaires, interview schedules, coding schemes, observation checklists, rating scales, tests, projective techniques, and measures using vignettes or scenarios.

HaPI: (a) enables faculty and researchers to locate instruments for research studies, journal articles, convention papers, class and laboratory exercises, workshops, grant proposals, and consulting activities; (b) offers students easy access to measures for papers, projects, theses, and dissertations, thereby enhancing learning and performance; (c) helps practitioners identify instruments to facilitate assessment of client/patient problems and outcomes at individual and organizational levels; (d) gives librarians and information specialists a measurement resource that cuts across disciplines and professions to meet user needs; (e) allows authors to track use of their measures by others.

Information Brought to Light: Most instruments are "buried" in avalanches of published literature and are hence difficult to discover. Worse still, scientists in one field (e.g., psychology or sociology) may be unfamiliar with instruments in other fields (e.g., medicine, nursing, public health). The majority of users do not have access to instruments that either have been recently developed or are described in unpublished manuscripts. These measures are generally known only by those in a particular field or subspecialty. By maintaining information on instruments from these diverse sources, HaPI enables users to retrieve relevant measures about which they might otherwise be unaware. Thus, HaPI helps researchers avoid "reinventing the wheel." HaPI places existing information on measurement instruments at users' fingertips, no farther away than their keyboard.

What You Get: The information in the HaPI database is designed to give users a better feel for instruments. To index key terms, HaPI uses MeSH (Medical Subject Headings), a thesaurus of key terms for the medical literature, and the Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms for the behavioral literature. A typical record may include: title, author(s), source, key terms (descriptors) to help users refine and/or continue their search, number of items in the instrument, subscale titles, an abstract that briefly describes the instrument, information on the instrument's reliability and validity, and selected references. So the next time you need an instrument, don't worry, just get HaPI.

Linda Perloff
Editor

Note From the Editor

Linda Perloff

This is the first issue of The Behavioral Measurements Letter, a semi-annual newsletter devoted to the exploration of timely measurement topics. The Behavioral Measurements Letter is published by Behavioral Measurement Database Services, producer of the Health and Psychosocial Instruments (HaPI) database.

The impetus for this newsletter sprang from our belief in the paramount importance of measurement. Just as in the physical sciences, advances in the health and behavioral sciences are proportional to advances in measurement. As Robert Pool stated in the case of the physical sciences, "These advances are vital, because science's understanding of the physical world is necessarily limited by the accuracy with which science can measure that world" (*Science*, 1988, 240, 604-605).

Accurate measurement in the health and behavioral sciences is similarly crucial, because researchers and practitioners must also be able to quantify their abstract concepts (e.g., mental status, leadership, abuse, empathy, compliance, well-being) in ways that are precise, meaningful, dependable, and generalizable. We hope to help professionals in the health and behavioral sciences meet the challenges of their profession by improving their access to relevant measurement instruments and to interdisciplinary measurement issues. We plan to focus on everyday issues in measurement that researchers and practitioners encounter in their quest for instruments. Future issues will also provide readers with updates on what's new in HaPI, selected new instruments from the database, and teaching tips for making measurement more exciting and meaningful for students. Each issue will feature guest columnists from different disciplines (library and information science, psychology, communication, nursing, medicine, sociology, social work, organizational behavior). Indeed, among the most important messages we hope to communicate with this newsletter is that measurement, a common bond linking all researchers, practitioners, educators, and evaluators, transcends disciplines and fields.

In Appreciation — A Tribute to Doris Bloch

The computerized Health and Psychosocial Instruments (HaPI) database would never have become a reality were it not for the vision of Doris Bloch, RN, Dr. PH, FAAN. She was the guiding light and efficacious advocate on behalf of HaPI at the National Institute for Nursing Research of the National Institutes of Health, an original sponsor of HaPI during its essential four-year developmental period. Dr. Bloch, who received her doctorate in public health from the University of California at Berkeley, is now Special Assistant to the Center's Director. During those early days when HaPI was undergoing its initial development, it was Doris Bloch's ability to anticipate and help resolve complex issues, along with her extensive background and sophistication in measurement and evaluation throughout the health sciences, that played a decisive role in the birth and sustenance of HaPI. An exemplary role model steadfastly reflecting the highest ethical standards, scholarship, and practice, Dr. Bloch's efforts on behalf of HaPI and many other endeavors identify her as a distinguished contributor to measurement and evaluation.

"The union of the mathematician
with the poet, fervor with measure,
passion with correctness, this surely
is the ideal."

William James (1879)

Using HaPI with Other Social Science Databases

William J. Paisley

The usefulness of social science databases is well known to researchers who find the references they need in minutes with a PC rather than hours in the library. With the help of well-screened search results, the trip to the library stacks to read the retrieved articles becomes a more enjoyable last step. Literature reviews are more comprehensive. New research projects build on the most recent findings of other investigators.

I have a new Public Health Service grant to compile information on health promotion programs focusing on key health problems such as cancer and cardiovascular disease. Although I have been active in this research area for almost 20 years, scores of relevant studies from many countries are added to this literature every year. My research must begin with a thorough search of the social science databases.

For years my preferred database for this type of search has been the Social Sciences Citation Index, which has a broad interdisciplinary coverage that saves some effort in searching all the disciplinary databases. Thanks to SSCI's unique Cited Reference field, I can use a recently completed study as my entry point, work backwards to its key references, then search forward again to other recent studies that cite the same earlier work. As references lead to references, this backwards-forwards tracing helps to fill in a survey of current research activity.

The HaPI database recently came to my rescue when I was having difficulty with one concept; cardiovascular knowledge or heart disease knowledge. There are no hits on these terms per se in the SSCI, although I know that many relevant articles are waiting to be found there.

I loaded HaPI in the library's CD-ROM reader and searched on cardiovascular knowledge. This was a three-step process, because I wanted to be sure that I found these terms in any field (e.g., title, abstract, descriptors) where they occur. First I ran down all occurrences of knowledge, which totaled 616 in these fields. Then I searched cardiovascular or heart disease, which totaled 115 occurrences. I combined these hits with what the librarians call Boolean "AND" logic, to pinpoint the instruments and studies that deal with both concepts. There were 27 occurrences at this intersection.

When I scanned the results, many of the 27 references proved to be good candidates for the SSCI search that followed. For example, a 1989 article in Health Education Quarterly by J. D. Killen and associates, "The Stanford Adolescent Heart Health Program," is represented in the HaPI database under the informative title, "knowledge of cardiovascular disease risk concepts".

I turned to SSCI with the Killen et al. article as the first entry point. It contained 61 references, several of which were "roots" to later studies. However, the results were even richer when I searched on Killen et al. as the cited reference. Eight recent studies cite Killen et al. One of these is an integrative review of cardiovascular disease, risk reduction, knowledge, etc. by B. L. Tinsley (Child Development, 1992). It contains 164 references!

This first search is not "the beginning of the end," as Churchill said, "but only the end of the beginning." The interplay between HaPI and other social science databases makes it possible to identify important

William J. Paisley is cofounder of the electronic publishing company, Knowledge Access, Inc. He received his PhD in communication research from Stanford University. Dr. Paisley's areas of specialization include public knowledge and the flow of scientific and technical information.

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A Welcome From HaPI's Director

Evelyn Perloff

I am excited by the realization that we can now communicate regularly with users of HaPI through The Behavioral Measurements Letter. The principal objective of HaPI is to provide measurement information to librarians, researchers, educators, practitioners, administrators, evaluators, and students in the health and behavioral sciences. We urge you to raise questions and keep us informed about your interests and needs, as they relate to HaPI and to The Behavioral Measurements Letter. We will respond as quickly and completely as possible. I also wish to share with you that the realization of HaPI and now The Behavioral Measurements Letter are two dreams come true. It has been over 20 years since the first words about a possible database of instruments were put to paper. It has been much longer, I assure you, when as an undergraduate chemistry major I learned to appreciate that to measure is to begin to know (even with errors of measurement). This orientation then became a foundation for how I thought and how I behaved, and since I have never found a better way to know, I continue to remain bullish about HaPI's capacity to enable us to do a better job of knowing. Indeed, I believe that HaPI has the potential for advancing our understanding of the underpinnings of health and behavior by enabling us to operationally define and quantify abstract concepts more accurately.

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Remember!

Did you know that...?

There are 70 instruments in HaPI with Self-Efficacy in the title, including:

- Self-Efficacy for Adult Stutterers
by Walter H. Manning & Amy F. Ornstein
- Computer Self-Efficacy Questionnaire
By Irene T. Miura
- Self-Efficacy and Exercise Habits Survey
by James F. Salbo, Robin B. Pinski,
Robin M. Grossman, Thomas L. Patterson,
& Phillip R. Nader

There are 34 records in HaPI with Caregiver in the title, including:

- Caregiver Hassles and Uplifts Scale
by J. M. Kinney & M. A. P. Stephens
- Caregiver Social Impact Scale
by S. W. Paulshock & G. T. Deimling
- Caregiver Burden Inventory
by Mark Novak & Carol Guest

There are 20 records in HaPI with Body Image in the title, including:

- Attitude to Body Image Scale
by Victoria R. Strang
- Body Image Detection Device
by Gary A. Ruff & Billy A. Barrids
- Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire
by James C. Rosen, Debra Srebnik, Elayne
Saltzberg, & Sally Wayne

HaPI-CD is quickly installed, readily operated, and easily searched.

HaPI-CD needs minimum equipment: any IBM-compatible PC with a CD-ROM drive, 640K RAM, and 500K free hard disk space.

HaPI-CD can be installed as a single user CD-ROM or on a network.

HaPI-CD's searchable record fields such as title, author, source, and index terms give you instant access to the information you want. What's more, you're in control of the search strategies and the information displayed at no additional cost.

HaPI-CD uses two thesauruses — Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and the Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms - to provide index terms for retrieving the records you want from HaPI.

Direct questions and orders to:

Evelyn Perloff, PhD, Director
Behavioral Measurement Database Services
Telephone: 412-687-6850
9 AM-5 PM, EST, Monday-Friday

The HaPI database is
available online through BRS
Search Service at your
campus / organization library

Evolving Issues in Instrumentation for Nursing Research

Ada S. Hinshaw

The rapid growth of nursing research during the past two decades has been due, in large part, to its emphasis on measurement. Not surprisingly, this effort has produced, and continues to produce, a variety of reliable and valid instruments relating to both the science and the practice of nursing.

If we are to maintain this level of productivity and excellence, we must continue to stress the role that measurement plays in nursing research, teaching, and practice. Toward this effort, I wish to propose that we address three measurement issues, in addition, of course, to reliability, validity, and sensitivity. A first issue concerns external validity, or the generalizability of research results across client populations, settings, and time. For example, in my area of research on job satisfaction, numerous scales are available, but many have not been tested with multiple nursing populations. The measures of job satisfaction used in these studies are often very different from one another. Because the concept of job satisfaction is multidimensional, different scales may assess very different aspects of the construct. This makes it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions across a set of studies.

A second issue relates to integrating physiological and behavioral measures, where the units of measurement and definitions of the same construct can be very different. This poses problems for nursing research and practice. Accurate diagnosis and appropriate intervention often require that nurses perform physiological and behavioral assessments. Moreover, nurses view patients holistically. Since nursing research attempts to understand concepts and relationships in the broader context of the whole individual, many phenomena are multi dimensional and are more completely understood with a diverse, multiple indicator approach. The challenge then becomes how to integrate multiple indicators in a meaningful way.

My third and last issue calls for ready access to the myriad instruments developed for nursing by nurses and other health and behavioral science researchers. Without current information on what already exists,

we are doomed to "reinventing the wheel," with great waste and expenditure of time, energy, and money.

We in nursing are, therefore, proud to have initiated funding for Health and Psychosocial Instruments (HaPI) in 1985. HaPI currently serves as a primary resource for linking the increasing number of available measures with the increasing number of users who need measurement instruments for their research, teaching, and practice.

Nursing science is at an exciting and challenging stage of development. Its emphasis on the generation of knowledge for practice and the development of instruments for accurate measurement will help to guarantee high standards of nursing care and nursing research. Consistent and valid measurement not only advances the science of nursing, but enables nurses to accurately identify symptoms and improve the quality of care to treat patients' problems.

Ada S. Hinshaw is Director of the National Institute for Nursing Research at the National Institutes of Health. She received her PhD in sociology from the University of Arizona and her MSN from Yale University. Dr. Hinshaw's areas of specialization include quality of patient caregiving and nursing staff turnover.

"Experience is the child of Thought
and Thought is the child of action."

Benjamin Disraeli (1826)

Up and Coming in our next issue

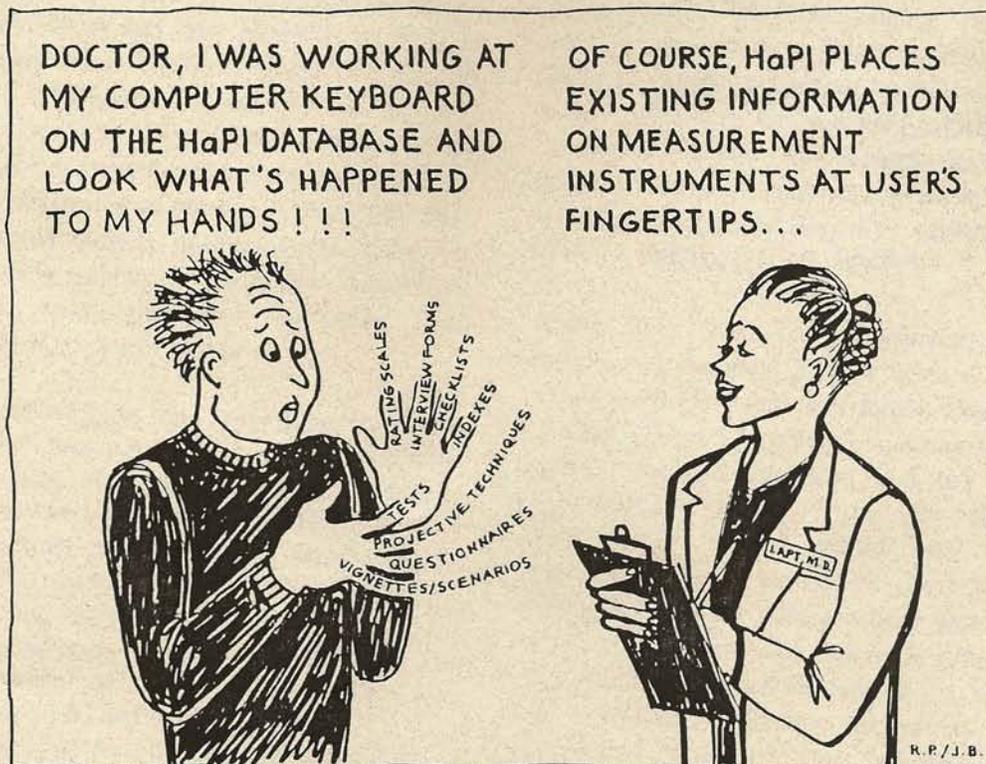


- Finding the Right Measure — *Charles Spielberger*
- Teaching Tips: How to Get Students Interested in Measurement — *Fred Bryant*
- For Good Measure - A Global View of Measurement — *Robert Perloff*
- HaPI's Historical Highlights — *Anne Canny*

We welcome your comments and suggestions about the future content of *The Behavioral Measurements Letter*. We also invite you to contribute letters or columns on measurement. We are eager to answer questions and we look forward to meeting the specific needs you identify. Send all material to:

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HaPI Thoughts



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