

**Women, drug use and mental health –
improving mental health measurement
in the DUMA program**

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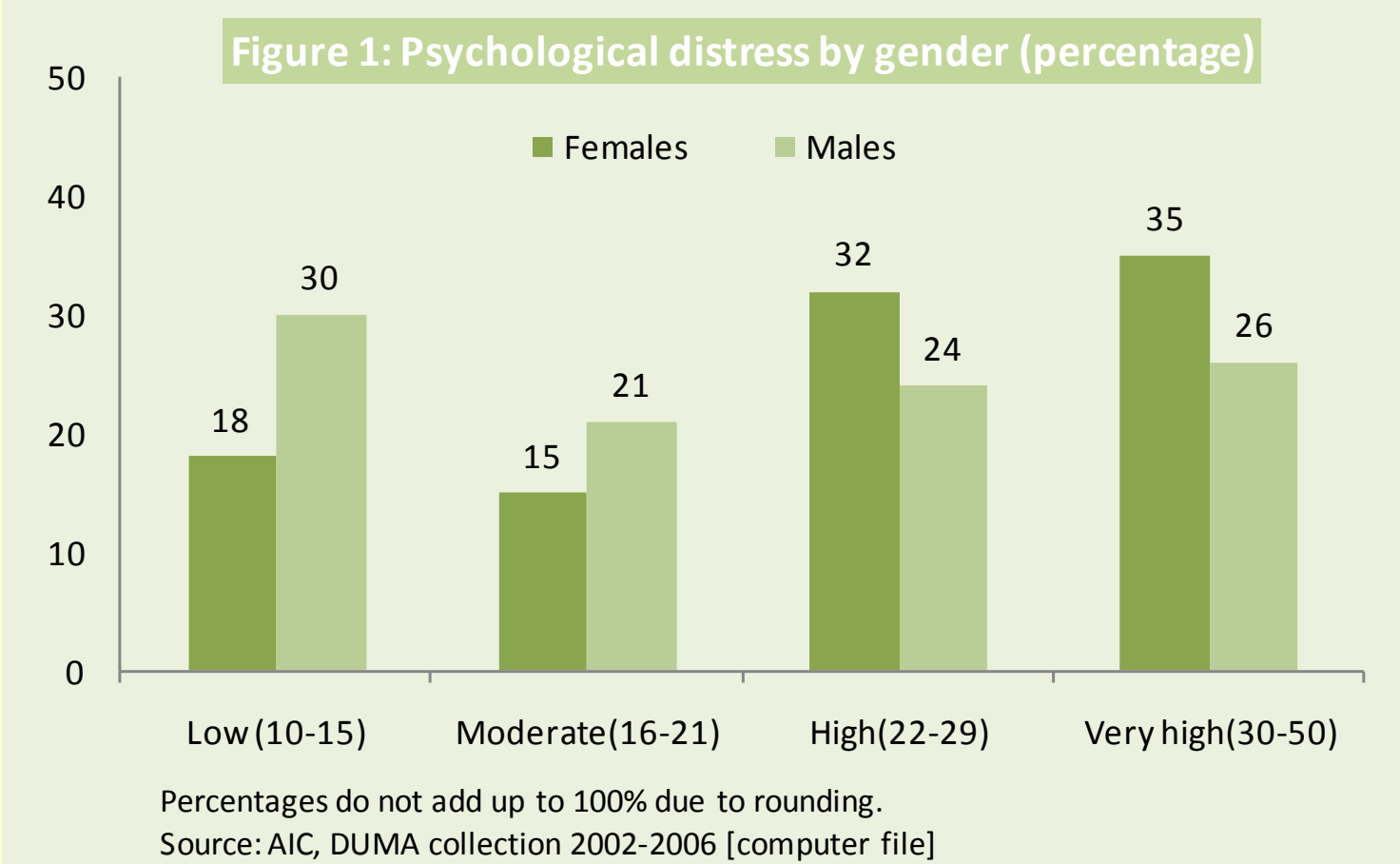
How has mental health been measured in DUMA?

Mental health indicators	Males	Females
Psychiatric hospital*	16%	21%
Psychoactive meds		
taking benzodiazepines	10%	18%
taking anti-depressants	7%	13%
taking anti-psychotics	4%	4%
taking at least 1 of above meds*	18%	29%
Experience of mental illness*	27%	39%

AIC DUMA [Computer file 2002-2006]

* = statistical significance

How has mental health been measured in DUMA?



Shortcomings of the current approach

- **Psychiatric hospitalisation**
 - very serious disorders
 - assessment
- **Medications**
 - been diagnosed AND
 - prescribed psychoactive medications AND
 - have taken their medications in the past fortnight

Shortcomings of the current approach

- K10 = non-specific psychological distress
- In DUMA context could be elevated due to
 - Stress from arrest
 - Substance use factors
 - Lifestyle factors
- Some questions were upsetting

Why measure mental health in DUMA detainees?

- **DUMA detainees are:**
 - a broad sample of offenders
 - at the gateway to the CJS
- **Estimate mental health service needs in CJS**
- **Monitor mental health service need in the CJS**

Potential uses for mental health information

- OH&S information for police
- OH&S information for corrective services
- Inform crime prevention strategies
 - Recidivism reduction
 - Early intervention

Conceptual issues for consideration

- Which data are informative about relationships between mental health and offending?
- Self-report diagnosis – current, historical?
- Functional impairment (eg: SF-12)
- Psychological distress (eg: MHI-5)
- Screen for likely mental disorder (eg: BJMHS, CMHS)

Pragmatic issues for consideration

- Limited time availability within DUMA interview
- Ethical considerations
- Understood by detainees of different cultural backgrounds

Some options

- Continue psychiatric hospitalisation and medications used
- *Have you ever been diagnosed by a doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist or nurse with a mental health problem?*
 - *If so, what have you been diagnosed with*
- *How old were you the first time you were diagnosed with a mental health problem?*
- Screen

Screen options – short list

- **Mental Health Inventory (MHI-5)**
 - 5 items
- **Brief Jail Mental Health Screen (BJMHS)**
 - 8 items
- **Corrections Mental Health Screen**
 - CMHS-M has 12 items
 - CMHS-F has 8 items

BJMHS and CMHS

- **Both designed to:**
 - administered by non clinicians
 - be brief
 - screen US jail entrants for possible mental disorder
- **Only validated in US jail detainees**

BJMHS

- **Designed to screen for schizophrenia, bipolar and major depression**
- **Does not screen for any anxiety or personality disorders**
- **WA prisoner study found problems with how Aboriginal women interpreted some questions**

BJMHS

- 1. Do you currently believe that someone can control your mind by putting thoughts into your head or taking thoughts out of your head?**
- 2. Do you currently feel that other people know your thoughts and can read your mind?**
- 3. Have you currently lost or gained as much as 2 pounds a week for several weeks without even trying?**
- 4. Have you or your family or friends noticed that you are currently much more active than you usually are?**
- 5. Do you currently feel like you have to talk or move more slowly than you usually do?**
- 6. Have there currently been a few weeks when you felt like you were useless or sinful?**
- 7. Are you currently taking any medication prescribed for you by a physician for any emotional or mental health problems?**
- 8. Have you ever been in a hospital for emotional or mental health problems?**

CMHS

- **Designed to screen for psychotic, affective, anxiety and some personality disorders**
- **Gender specific versions**
- **Not been used in Australia**

CMHS – common questions

1. Do you get annoyed when friends and family complain about their problems? Or do people complain you are not sympathetic to their problems?
2. Have you ever tried to avoid reminders of, or to not think about, something terrible that you experienced or witnessed?
3. Some people find their mood changes frequently - as if they spend every day on an emotional rollercoaster. For example, switching from feeling angry to depressed to anxious many times a day. Does this sound like you?
4. Has there ever been a time when you felt depressed most of the day for at least 2 weeks?
5. Have you been troubled by repeated thoughts, feelings, or nightmares about something terrible that you experienced or witnessed?
6. Have you ever been in the hospital for non-medical reasons, such as a psychiatric hospital? (Do NOT include going to an Emergency Room if you were not hospitalized)

Gender specific questions

- **Women:**

7. Have there ever been a few weeks when you felt you were useless, sinful, or guilty?
8. Do you find that most people will take advantage of you if you let them know too much about you?

- **Men:**

7. Have you ever had worries that you just can't get rid of?
8. Have you ever felt like you didn't have any feelings, or felt distant or cut off from other people or from your surroundings?
9. Has there ever been a time when you felt so irritable that you found yourself shouting at people or starting fights or arguments?
10. Do you often get in trouble at work or with friends because you act excited at first but then lose interest in projects and don't follow through?
11. Do you tend to hold grudges or give people the silent treatment for days at a time?
12. Have you ever felt constantly on guard or watchful even when you didn't need to, or felt jumpy and easily startled?

Feedback, criticisms and suggestions please

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