

How Wise Are You?



Researchers at University of California San Diego School of Medicine report that a seven-item scale can help determine a person's level of wisdom. The results are apparently quite reliable.

The same researchers had previously developed a 28-item San Diego Wisdom Scale (SD-WISE-28). The scale has been used in several large national and international studies, biological research and clinical trials to evaluate wisdom.

However, in a recent study published in *International Psychogeriatrics*, the same researchers propose a shortened version of the scale - the SD-WISE-7 or Jeste-Thomas Wisdom Index. They found the results from this scale were comparable to SD-WISE-28 and reliable.

"Wisdom measures are increasingly being used to study factors that impact mental health and optimal ageing. We wanted to test if a list of only seven items could provide valuable information to test wisdom," said senior author Dilip V. Jeste, MD, senior associate dean for the Center of Healthy Aging and Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Neurosciences at UC San Diego School of Medicine.

Previous studies show that wisdom comprises of seven components: self-reflection, pro-social behaviours, emotional regulation, acceptance of diverse perspectives, decisiveness, social advising, and spirituality.

In this new study, the researchers surveyed 2,093 participants, ages 20 to 82, through the online crowdsourcing platform Amazon Mechanical Turk. They selected seven statements SD-WISE-28 that relate to the seven components of wisdom. Each statement was rated on a 1 to 5 scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Examples of statements include "I remain calm under pressure" and "I avoid situations where I know my help will be needed."

According to the researchers, just because their is shorter does not mean it is less valid. The right type of questions have been included to get the most important information that would help determine wisdom. The SD-WISE-7 was found to strongly and positively correlate with resilience, happiness and mental well-being and strongly and negatively correlate with loneliness, depression and anxiety.

These findings suggest the use of interventions to increase levels of specific components of wisdom as they could potentially help reduce loneliness and promote overall well-being. Wisdom can protect people from loneliness, suicide and opioid. These are all important issues that need to be addressed.

Researchers plan to broaden their research and include genetic, biological, psychosocial and cultural studies with diverse populations to assess wisdom and factors related to mental, physical and cognitive health.

"We need wisdom for surviving and thriving in life. Now, we have a list of questions that take less than a couple of minutes to answer that can be put into clinical practice to try to help individuals," said Jeste.

Source: [UC San Diego Health](#)

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