

Kraemer, Helena Chmura, Kazdin, Alan E., Offord, David R. (1997). Coming to terms with terms of risk. Archives of General Psychiatry, 54, 337-343.

Purpose:

- Define basic concepts of risk.
- List risk factors.
- Identify risk factors in research reports.

Literature Review: When deciding on how many participants are needed for risk studies, Thiemann (1987) was used. Researching what factors would lead to suicide attempts and suicide Hawton (1986) was used. Researchers were used for many different risk factors. Some included: Wetzel (1984) on depression; Wilson (1994) on alcohol and drug use.

Methods:

- Sample: No specific participants available in this study on risk factors — more on defining what risk factors are.
- Variables: Basic concepts of risk, importance of time in defining outcome, population specificity of risk factors, risk factor — a typology, and applications of risk factors.
- Procedures: Evaluating risk has five steps:
  - 1) Define the outcome clearly and completely and measure it validly and reliably.
  - 2) Define the population and sample it properly.
  - 3) Define the risk factor; establish that it defines a characteristic that occurs before the outcome, and measure it validly and reliably.
  - 4) Use analytical procedures that a statistically significant difference exists in the risks of these two groups.
  - 5) Use analytical procedures that lead to meaningful demonstrations of potency to establish that a clinically significant or poly-significant difference exists in the risks of high- and low-risk groups (Kraemer, 1997).

Results/Conclusions:

- In a risk-assessment study, time needs to be well-defined and measured as part of the definition of the outcome (Kraemer, 1997).
- The population specificity of risk factors is an especially important issue in multi-site studies being that the site itself may be a risk or protective factor for certain outcomes (Kraemer, 1997).
- A factor when dealing with risk can be any characterization of any subject (Kraemer, 1997).