

An environmental scan summary:

Tools for measuring burnout among aged care staff

This report describes the methods and findings of the original environmental scan conducted in November 2022. This scan was re-run in November 2023 and resulted in several additional information about tools used for staff burnout in aged care. We will continue to repeat the scan process at scheduled intervals to ensure content currency.

Key points

- A three-pronged search strategy was undertaken to identify tools used to measure burnout amongst aged care workers in Australia and beyond.
- The search identified five tools that were used to measure workforce burnout in Australian aged care settings and an additional 12 tools used for aged care workers beyond Australia.
- All tools were found to have good validity and reliability properties.
- There are existing tools to choose from with good validity and reliability that organisations and individuals can use to assess burnout levels, depending on the subscales or domains of interest (i.e., exhaustion, depersonalisation etc.).

Background

The aim of this environmental scan was to undertake a limited desktop review to identify existing tools used to measure burnout among the aged care workforce with a particular focus on those that have been used in an Australian population. Burnout is a syndrome that results from chronic stress at work and usually occurs amongst individuals who work with, and provide service to, other people. [1, 2] Therefore, tools to measure burnout were explored in this environmental scan completed by the Knowledge and Implementation Hub team.

Methods

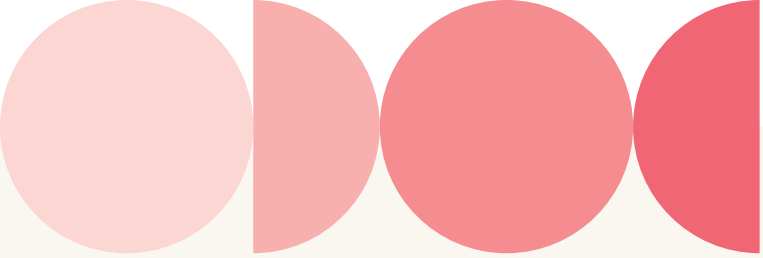
The environmental scan followed a structured method for identifying tools that measured burnout among aged care staff in Australia. This included a defined search strategy and eligibility checking against inclusion criteria. These processes are explained in further detail below.

Keeping the evidence current

A preliminary environmental scan on burnout tools used in aged care was conducted in November 2022. This document presents an update of the environmental scan, which was conducted in November 2023.

Search strategy

The scan adopted a three-pronged approach in identifying relevant tools.



Google advanced searches

Structured Google Advanced searches for tools used to measure burnout amongst aged care workers in Australia were undertaken from the 13 to 16 of November 2023. These searches applied the Chrome browser in incognito mode to avoid previous search history impacting results.

The search was structured as follows:

- The search terms tools or measures AND aged care were entered in the advanced Google search box combined with burnout or resilience.
- Australia was selected from the Region drop-down menu. However, as there are results that yielded non-Australian references as well, we expanded the search to non-Australian settings as they may provide information on other available tools of potential use in future Australian projects on burnout amongst aged care workers.

For each search run in Google Advanced, we aimed to retrieve and review the first 50 relevant resources.

Scanning key Australian aged care websites

A list of key organisations and grey literature relevant to the topic of aged care workforce was compiled for more targeted searching. Organisations were identified during the scan process or were already known to the researcher group.

They included:

- Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care
- COTA
- Australian Association of Gerontology: Grey Literature
- Library Australian Ageing Agenda
- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
- Aged Care Workforce Industry Council

Google Scholar and focused PubMed searches

Since the tools to measure burnout are often reported in journal articles as part of research studies, a limited but focused search of the literature was undertaken in Google Scholar and PubMed.

The search was structured as follows:

- The search terms tools or measures AND burnout or resilience AND aged care, were entered in Google Scholar.
- The detailed PubMed search is available in Appendix 1 of this document.

An additional step was undertaken in this update, whereby burnout tools were also extracted from the included studies of the Scoping Review.

Inclusion criteria

Tools were considered for inclusion if they:

- were available online or could be ordered online (e.g., kit)
- provided information about the source or developer of the tool and psychometric testing (validity and reliability)
- were used in an aged care settings

Modified eligibility criteria

The initial environmental scan's eligibility criteria were expanded to encompass diverse populations across various settings, spanning different health sectors and other industries on a global scale. This expansion was driven by the insufficient availability of burnout tools utilised in the Australian aged care sector. In this update of the environmental scan, the eligibility criteria were modified to specifically include burnout tools exclusively used in aged care. This adjustment was prompted by the increasing utilisation of burnout tools among aged care workers. The international perspective was retained to address ongoing gaps in tool application within the Australian context.

Resilience was excluded from the eligibility criteria, considering its distinct nature from burnout. Prioritising burnout tools allows for a more targeted evaluation, avoiding potential confusion with factors stemming from separate constructs.



Data extraction

The following information about each tool was entered in a spreadsheet:

- tool name
- citation to the tool's development/validation study
- subscales or domains
- number of items and scoring process
- brief description of the tool's psychometric properties (validity and reliability)
- administration (i.e., who administers the tool and in what format)
- how to access to the complete tool.

Results

The 2022 scan identified five tools that assessed burnout among aged care staff in Australia. [1-9] No additional tools specific to the Australian aged care context were identified in the updated scan. The updated scan also identified 12 tools used internationally to measure burnout among aged care workers. [10-45] Three of the tools including the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), MBI-Human Services Survey, and the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) was also employed in both the Australian and international aged care settings. [3, 6, 27, 28, 38-44, 46-82] There were two tools (Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire, Professional Quality of Life) that measured burnout as a sub-scale. [18, 21, 31, 35-37] The sub-scale was used independent to the overall scale to measure burnout outcomes among aged care workers. [18, 21, 31, 35-37]

The most commonly evaluated domain from the included tools was the measure of exhaustion, [1-5, 9-34, 38-82] followed by depersonalisation, [1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 25, 27-29, 31-33, 38-44, 46-83] and personal accomplishment. [1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 25, 27, 28, 31-33, 38, 39, 46-82] Other burnout domains included stress, [6, 7, 18, 21, 31] compassion satisfaction, [18, 21, 31, 45] and work environment. [45]

Target audience

The tools were used among multiple professions within aged care.

They included:

- Physicians
- Nurses
- Allied Health Professionals
- Care workers
- Managers

For detailed information on each tool, including specific subscales, psychometric properties, number of items, scoring system, and administration methods, please refer to the environmental scan tools webpage.

Conclusion

There are existing tools with good validity and reliability that organisations and individuals can use to assess if burnout levels are increasing in the aged care workforce. Of note, choice of tools will depend not only on the validity and reliability of the tools, but also on the burnout components or subscales of interest. This is important so that strategies to prevent and address burnout can be prioritised, tailored, and implemented as early as possible, weather on a personal level or workplace setting.

We note that only a few tools to measure burnout and resilience in the aged care workforce populations have been used with Australian populations. This is due to limited research and projects that investigated burnout levels of the Australian aged care workforce.

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Appendix 1

The following PubMed search was used to specifically search for tools:

(Burnout, Professional[majr] OR Compassion fatigue[majr] OR Occupational stress[majr] OR burnout[ti] OR burn out[ti] OR compassion fatigue[tiab] OR emotional exhaustion[tiab] OR depersonali*[tiab] OR occupational stress[tiab] OR professional stress[tiab] OR Resilience, Psychological[majr] OR resilien*[ti] OR ((staff[ti] OR worker*[ti] OR workforce[ti] OR employee*[ti] OR nurse*[ti] OR aide*[ti]) AND (Self care[majr] OR self care[ti])) AND (screening[ti] OR tool*[ti] OR inventor*[ti] OR scale*[ti] OR questionnaire*[ti] OR checklist*[ti] OR measur*[ti])) AND (systematic review[ti] OR systematic literature review[ti] OR systematic scoping review[ti] OR systematic narrative review[ti] OR systematic qualitative review[ti] OR systematic evidence review[ti] OR systematic quantitative review[ti] OR systematic meta review[ti] OR systematic critical review[ti] OR systematic mixed studies review[ti] OR systematic mapping review[ti] OR systematic cochrane review[ti] OR systematic search and review[ti] OR systematic integrative review[ti] OR rapid review[ti] OR evidence synthesis[ti] OR meta synthesis[ti] OR metasynthesis[ti] OR meta analysis [ti] OR metaanalysis[ti] OR (Cochrane Database Syst Rev[ta] AND review[pt]) OR systematic review[pt]) AND English[la]

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