



How Other Assessment Tools Measure Up to the Mini Nutritional Assessment

Two recent literature reviews identified nutritional screening and assessment tools available for use by nurses with all populations¹ and with older adults.² Of the 71 such tools found, 21 were developed specifically for use with older adults. Of these, the Mini Nutritional Assessment has been the most extensively investigated with regard to reliability and validity, and it has been validated with older adults in a variety of settings. The following summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of other geriatric nutrition assessment tools developed in the United States.—*Rose Ann DiMaria-Ghalili, PhD, RN, CNSN, and Peggy A. Guenter, PhD, RN, CNSN*

Tool	Advantages	Disadvantages	Additional comments
Nutritional Risk Index ³ (16 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be administered by anyone • Brief, simple to administer, can be used in telephone surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although there is evidence that the tool has adequate reliability, its clinical validity has not been established • It's unclear whether low scores correlate to poor nutrition, poor general health, or greater use of health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the first National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES I)
DETERMINE Your Nutritional Health Checklist (10 items) ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be administered by the older adult, her or his spouse or partner, or a health care professional • Anthropometric measures aren't needed • The Nutrition Screening Initiative (NSI) has published numerous books and articles aimed at guiding different health care professionals in how to use checklist results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is limited evidence on its validity, and little or no evidence on its reliability, sensitivity, and specificity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed by the NSI as a self-administered tool to increase awareness of the warning signs of poor nutritional health • Additional nutrition assessment tools developed by the NSI include the Level I and Level II Screens, which permit basic and in-depth evaluation and were designed for use by health and certain other professionals. Level I and II questions aren't scored, so there are no scoring norms

REFERENCES

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3. Wolinsky FD, et al. Progress in the development of a nutritional risk index. *J Nutr* 1990; 120 Suppl 11:1549-53.
4. Nutrition Screening Initiative. *Nutrition screening manual for professionals caring for older Americans*. Washington, D.C.: The Initiative; 1991.