# Designing and Validation of a Tool for Community Mental Health Preparedness in Disasters: A Sequential Exploratory Mixed-Method Approach

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The dissertation by Juliet Roudini at the University of Leipzig addresses the urgent need for a valid and reliable tool to assess community mental health preparedness in the face of disasters. With a particular focus on Iran, a country frequently affected by natural disasters, especially earthquakes, this study adopts a sequential exploratory mixed-method approach to fill the gap in the assessment of community mental health preparedness. The research is grounded in the understanding that disasters not only cause physical damage but also have profound psychological impacts, which are often overshadowed by immediate physical needs. Recognizing the scarcity of tools that account for cultural-contextual nuances in assessing mental preparedness, Roudini developed and validated a tool specifically tailored to the Iranian context.

The methodology encompassed both qualitative and quantitative phases. Initially, through a systematic literature review and qualitative interviews with experts and laypeople who have experienced disasters, the study derived items for assessing mental health preparedness. This exploratory phase identified five key themes: cultural values and beliefs, risk beliefs, mental preparedness in disasters, psychological processes, and trust. Subsequently, the items were subjected to rigorous psychometric testing for validity and reliability, resulting in a final questionnaire that effectively measures community mental health preparedness with six identified factors.

The findings underline the complexity of mental preparedness for disasters, emphasizing the need for a multifaceted approach that considers risk perception, trust in social structures, and cultural sensitivities. The validated tool presents an innovative contribution to disaster preparedness efforts, enabling the assessment and enhancement of mental health readiness in communities, particularly in culturally diverse settings like Iran. This research not only contributes a novel instrument to the field but also offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and improving community mental health preparedness in disaster scenarios.

**Keywords:** Community Mental Health, Disaster Preparedness, Instrument Development, Psychometric Properties, Sequential Exploratory Mixed-Method.

## Biography

Dr. Juliet Roudini is a distinguished psychologist and researcher based in Berlin, Germany. Born in Zahedan, Iran, she has dedicated her career to enhancing mental health preparedness and support in disaster situations. Juliet obtained her Ph.D. in Educational and Rehabilitation Psychology from the University of Leipzig, where her dissertation focused on community mental health preparedness in disasters. Her expertise encompasses PTSD, family well-being, and work-life balance, among other areas. Juliet has served as a research fellow at the QUEST Center, Berlin Institute of Health Charité, and contributed to significant projects and studies, including the management of patient and stakeholder engagement. Her work has led to the development of a context-specific tool for assessing mental health preparedness in Iran, reflecting her commitment to culturally sensitive health management. Juliet's contributions extend to teaching, with positions held at the University of Leipzig and the Karolinska Institute, Sweden. She is fluent in Farsi, and English, and has proficiency in German.

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