

Ronald C. Kessler, PhD is the McNeil Family Professor of Health Care Policy at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Kessler's research deals broadly with the social determinants of mental health and illness as studied from an epidemiological perspective. He is the author of over 600 publications and the recipient of many awards for his research, including the Senior Scientist and MERIT awards from the National Institute of Mental Health. He has been rated as the most widely cited researcher in the world in the field of psychiatry for each of the past fifteen years and is a member of both the Institute of Medicine and the National Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Kessler is the Principal Investigator of the US National Comorbidity Survey, the first nationally representative survey of the prevalence and correlates of mental disorders in the U.S., and a Co-Director of the World Health Organization's World Mental Health Survey Initiative, a series of comparative community epidemiological surveys of the prevalence and correlates of mental disorders and treatment for these disorders in 26 countries around the world. In addition to his epidemiological studies, Kessler is involved in evaluating a number of innovative programs for the prevention and treatment of mental illness in high-risk segments of the population. Finally, Dr. Kessler is the Principal Investigator of the Harvard Medical School site for STARRS-LS, a research program funded by the Department of Defense to study risk and protective factors for suicide among Army personnel.

Dr. Kessler earned his PhD in sociology from New York University in 1975. He completed a postdoctoral fellowship in psychiatric epidemiology at the University of Wisconsin before joining the faculty at the University of Michigan in 1979. He was a Professor of Sociology and a Program Director at Michigan's Institute for Social Research at the time he took his current position at Harvard Medical School in 1994.