

Ronald Kessler is a Professor of Health Care Policy at Harvard Medical School. He received his PhD in Medical Sociology from NYU in 1975. He then did postdoctoral training at the New York State Psychiatric Institute and the University of Wisconsin in psychiatric epidemiology before joining the faculty at the University of Michigan in 1979. He remained on the faculty at Michigan for 17 years, where he became a Professor in the Department of Sociology and a Program Director in Michigan's Institute for Social Research. He moved to his current position as Professor of Health Care Policy at Harvard Medical School in 1997. 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 500 publications and the recipient of many awards for his research, including Senior Scientist and MERIT awards from the National Institute of Mental Health. Kessler has been rated by the ISI as the most widely cited researcher in the field of psychiatry in the world for each of the last nine years. He is a member of the Institute of Medicine and in 2008 was the first psychiatric epidemiologist ever elected to membership in the National Academies of Science. Kessler is the Principal Investigator of the U.S. National Comorbidity Survey, the first nationally representative survey of the prevalence and correlates of mental disorders in the US (www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/ncs). He is also the co-director of the World Health Organization World Mental Health Survey Initiative, a series of comparative community epidemiological surveys of the prevalence of mental disorders, patterns of help seeking for these disorders, and barriers to treatment for these disorders in 28 countries around the world (www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/wmh). He is the Director of the Hurricane Katrina Community Advisory Group (www.HurricaneKatrina.med.harvard.edu). 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.