

Templer D I. The construction and validation of a Death Anxiety Scale.

J. Gen. Psychol. 82:165-77, 1970.

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The Death Anxiety Scale was developed and found to have good reliability, internal consistency, and freedom from response sets. Validation was carried out with college students and psychiatric patients. Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) correlations were obtained and discussed. [The *Social Sciences Citation Index*® (SSCI)® indicates that this paper has been cited in over 150 publications since 1970, making it the 2nd most-cited paper published in this journal.]

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"This article was the product of my 1967 University of Kentucky doctoral dissertation. In the mid-1960s, death was a taboo topic, not only with the general public but with behavioral scientists and mental health professionals. Fortunately, my dissertation committee, Jesse G. Harris, Jr., chairman, Juris I. Berzins, Albert J. Lott, Frank A. Pattie, and E. Grant Youmans, were far-sighted persons who were willing to participate in a pioneering adventure.

"As a psychology undergraduate and a clinical psychology graduate student, I was puzzled as to why psychologists said so little about death and its fear while saying so much about other important aspects of human existence such as aggression and sex. The small amount that had been written often relegated death anxiety to a phenomenon having roots in supposedly more basic entities such as castration anxiety. I can still vividly recall a very incisive com-

ment of committee member Pattie in criticism of such a position. He said, 'Death is the ultimate castration.' The limited research on death anxiety was impeded by lack of an adequate published measuring instrument. So I proceeded to develop the Death Anxiety Scale for my dissertation.

"I am grateful for the cooperation of my early research subjects who were surprised at such a novel topic and yet regarded the research as a serious and legitimate undertaking worthy of their time.

"After I published the article, I expanded my focus to include the death anxiety resemblance of family members, and death anxiety level as a function of age, sex, religion, and personality and psychopathological variables.^{1,2} I then developed my 'two-factor theory' for the determination of degree of death anxiety.³ This conceptualization holds that death anxiety is a function of both psychological health and experiences pertaining to the matter of death. Within a few years, my scale was translated into a number of different languages and scores of students throughout the world were using it for doctoral dissertations. I tend to think that my most important theoretical and empirical death anxiety contributions were made after the scale was developed. However, I realize that I am best known for the scale and this one classic article. It is cited so much because it filled a methodological void at a time when thanatology was in its infancy. I happened to be at the right place at the right time and to have received excellent guidance from my dissertation committee. Other similar scales have been developed, but mine continues to dominate because of its psychometric soundness, and because I believe its content captures the essence of death anxiety as a universal experience."

1. Templer D I, Ruff C M & Franks C M. The relationship of age and sex to death anxiety.

Develop. Psychol. 4:108, 1971. (Cited 40 times.)

2. Templer D I. Death anxiety in religiously very involved persons. *Psychol. Rep.* 31:361-2, 1972. (Cited 30 times.)

3. Two-factor theory of death anxiety. *Essence* 1:91-3, 1976.