

Structural Equation Modeling: A Primer for Health Behavior Researchers

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Objective: To introduce the state of the art of structural equation modeling (SEM). **Method:** This primer is organized in a manner allowing readers to review any one of 5 freestanding sections. **Results:** SEM maintains several advantages over regression and other multivariate techniques. Through a 2-step modeling process, SEM strengthens research by allowing for the specification of complex, theory-driven models

that can be tested with empirical data. Although use of SEM alone is not a magic solution, new software developments provide users with unparalleled flexibility for improving research. **Conclusion:** SEM must be thrust into the daily vocabulary and routine practice of health behavior researchers.

Key words: health behavior research, structural equation models, SEM, multivariate statistics, primer

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