

THE WETC PSYCHOLOGY NEWSLETTER

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"Find the Truth, Tell the Story"

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Introducing the MMPI-3

Some of you may remember when the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2) was published in 1989 or perhaps in 2008 when the MMPI-2-Restructured Form (MMPI-2-RF) was published. However, many of you may not recall when the original MMPI was published way back in 1946. Nonetheless, The MMPI is arguably the most widely researched and used instrument in clinical psychology and considered the keystone of all clinical psychological test batteries in medical-legal settings. In this regard, the MMPI is able to provide information not only about psychopathology but about the test-taker's credibility, basic personality, and how they are functioning in the world from a psychological standpoint. During the over 70 year span that the MMPI has been in clinical use, hundreds of books and thousands of research articles have been published demonstrating that the MMPI is a valid and reliable measure of personality and psychopathology. It is this body of professional literature that gives the test its credibility in a medical-legal context. In its original form, the MMPI consists of 566 true-false questions. Demonstrably valid versions are available in multiple languages. The test is standardized in that there is a specific set of procedures for its administration and scoring.

The interpretation of all versions of the MMPI is a two-step process. This process is clearly outlined in the psychological literature. The first step involves

interpreting the validity scale scores. Essentially, the validity scale scores indicate if the individual has completed the test in an honest and forthright manner or if there is numerical evidence of the lack of credibility of the remaining MMPI scores. However, the validity scales are within normal limits, the test interpreter moves on to making comments about the clinical scale scores that are used to draw conclusions about the individual's personality and the possible existence of psychopathology. If the validity scale scores are not all within normal limits, all interpretation of the MMPI must cease and nothing can be said about the patient's clinical scale scores or their psychological status besides what can be gleaned from the validity scale scores.

The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2) is the 1989 revision of the MMPI. At that time, the test distributors made it known in the testing manual that the motivation for revising the original MMPI and publishing the 567-question MMPI-2 was, in part, wide-concern about questions that were labeled as having "sexist wording, outmoded idiomatic expressions, and references to increasingly unfamiliar literary material and recreational activities." Specifically, in constructing the MMPI-2 from the questions that appear on the MMPI, 13 items from the MMPI were deleted and 87 were changed to some degree, with many of those questions showing only minor changes. Another reason for revising the original MMPI was said to address the "outdated" MMPI and to make the test more relevant to the current

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population, which at that time was 1989. However, there are ample data in the professional research showing that the MMPI-2 is not as good an indicator of an individual's psychological status as the original MMPI test.

In further support of the conclusion that the MMPI-2 has major problems is the test distributor's release in July, 2008 of what is called the MMPI-2-Restructured Form (MMPI-2-RF). The MMPI-2-RF is based on what are called the Restructured Scales (RC Scales) that the test distributor, Pearson Assessments in Bloomington, Minnesota, states "provide a more clearly focused interpretation" of the clinical scale scores.

2020 was a "different" year to say the least, that most people will remember for the onset of the global pandemic. In 2020, the world saw many challenges, struggles, innovations, resistance and hope. In the fields of psychology and psychiatry, specifically, the area of psychological testing, the world saw the publication of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-3 (MMPI-3). The MMPI-3 is a revision that was created and published in the latter part of 2020 and is derived from prior versions of the MMPI. Specifically, according to the MMPI-3 manual, 263 of the 335 MMPI-3 test items were drawn directly from the MMPI-2-RF. With that said, it is safe to say that the MMPI-3 is relatively similar to the MMPI-2-RF. Like the MMPI-2-RF, the

needed process of independent research conducted by professionals who are not associated with the publication, distribution, marketing or sale of any of the MMPI-3 products has not yet demonstrated that the MMPI-3 can provide an accurate portrayal of an individual's psychological status. In this regard, what is needed is more independent research conducted by individuals who are not associated with the publication, distribution, marketing or sale of the test. As of this writing, the MMPI-3 has been the subject of only six published research articles appearing in the PsycINFO database. This database provides information on all articles published in a wide variety of languages in over 1,300 professional journals between 1872 and 2021. Unfortunately, without the needed independent research the original MMPI will maintain its prominence and superiority in the assessment of personality and psychopathology.

In short, it can be said that the publication of the MMPI-3 was tantamount to admitting that the MMPI-2 and the MMPI-2-RF were inadequate and needed help. While we will all see more and more use of the MMPI-3 in the coming months and years, it can also be said that the ambiguity concerning the usefulness of the MMPI-3 will not be resolved for many years while we wait for the results from independent researchers to clarify the situation. Thus, until that time comes, if it ever does, the MMPI will maintain its prominence and superiority in the assessment of psychopathology.

This is the one hundred forty-ninth of a series of monthly newsletters aimed at providing information about pre-deposition/pre-trial consultations, psychological evaluations and treatment that may be of interest to attorneys and insurance adjusters working in the areas of workers' compensation and personal injury. If you have not received some or all of our past newsletters, and would like copies, send us an email requesting the newsletter(s) that you would like forwarded to you.