

Psychological Tests and the Law

I. The Statistical Approach to Evaluation.

- A. The establishment of norms: The Bell Curve.
- B. Validity: Does the test measure what it is supposed to.
- C. Reliability: Is the test consistent from time to time, person to person.
- D. Actuarial prediction is better than clinical judgment.

II. Intelligence Tests

- A. Stanford Binet
- B. Wechsler Tests.
 - a) WPPSI
 - b) WISC
 - c) WAIS
 - 1) Verbal skills
 - 2) Perceptual motor skills
- C. Legal Cases
 - A. Competence to stand trial
 - B. Various legal competencies: execution, testamentary capacity, confession.
 - C. Criminal responsibility.
 - D. Neuropsychological evaluation damages in civil cases.

III. Personality Tests

- A. DSM or not?
 - 1) What is DSM
 - a) Universal language
 - b) Conceptual vs. operational definitions
 - c) Validity measures
 - 1) Faking bad
 - 2) Faking good
 - 3) Social desirability
- B. Purpose
 - 1) Objective
 - 2) Speed
 - 3) Latent characteristics

- C. Methodology: Comparison with known groups
- D. Axis I – Acute Pathology
- E. Axis II – Personality Pathology
- F. Major tests

- 1) MMPI

- a) 10 major scales from mild to severe
- b) Severe personality patterns
- c) Acute pathology

- 2) Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory

- a) Personality patterns
- b) Severe personality patterns
- c) Acute pathology

- G. Applications

- a) Criminal responsibility
- b) Competency
- c) Personal injury
- d) Wrongful discharge

IV. Forensic Specific Tests

- A. Disparity between psychological tests and legal concepts

- 1) insanity
- 2) competency
- 3) functional changes in tort law.

- B. Current Tests

- 1) Rodgers Criminal Responsibility Scale
- 2) M-CAT
- 3) Various Competencies
- 4) Cross validation

V. Future Directions Psychology and Law Integration of Tests