

INTRODUCTION

The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory—2 (MMPI–2; Butcher, Dahlstrom, Graham, Tellegen, & Kaemmer, 1989) is a widely researched personality measure that forensic psychologists use for assessing an examinee’s mental health and personality adjustment when undertaking forensic psychological evaluations for court cases (see, for example, Bow, Flens, & Gould, 2010; Lally, 2003). The MMPI–2 is the personality measure they use most widely for assessing an examinee’s mental health and personality adjustment in making their recommendations for court decisions in several settings, such as family custody and child protection evaluations, personal injury assessments, work compensation and disability decisions, immigration evaluations, and criminal court decisions.

Our goal in writing this book was to develop a guide for interpreting the MMPI–2 in forensic settings that gives the forensic psychologist conducting evaluations and attorneys representing clients who are involved in court cases in which the MMPI–2 has been introduced both a valuable overview

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Using the MMPI–2 in Forensic Assessment, by J. N. Butcher, G. A. Hass, R. L. Greene, and L. D. Nelson
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of contemporary developments and pertinent historical background in using the MMPI–2 in forensic evaluations. We provide a number of forensic case examples throughout the book to illustrate a practical approach on the interpretive strategies for the test. Essential to the use of any psychological test is the need to examine research base support and new developments that influence the application of the instrument. Although some basic background on the MMPI–2 for interpretation of scales in forensic settings is provided, the main goal is to provide a technical resource for using the MMPI–2 in advanced interpretation in forensic evaluations. We assume that the reader has a basic understanding of the MMPI–2.

THE MMPI–2 IN FORENSIC EVALUATIONS

This book was developed to serve as a guide for interpreting the MMPI–2 in these various settings and to provide resource material on the MMPI–2 in order to assist forensic psychologists in preparing for testimony in court cases based upon the instrument. The goals of the book include the following:

1. Describe forensic evaluations and the appropriate role that the MMPI–2 can play in assessing personality and in understanding the credibility of patient report in personality evaluation of examinees in various settings.
2. Provide an introduction to forensic assessment with the MMPI–2.
3. Include an overview of research supporting use of the MMPI–2 in neuropsychological, personal injury, child custody, and family violence cases and in evaluations of criminals.
4. Highlight the demands and challenges that can occur in many forensic evaluations and describe how the MMPI–2 provides valuable personality information that can assist the practitioner in developing hypotheses about the client's behavior and mental-health symptoms in various forensic assessments.
5. Provide an overview of the cultural considerations in interpretation of the MMPI–2 in forensic assessment and provide information and relevant strategies for conducting evaluations in assessing immigrants.
6. Highlight the demands and challenges that may occur in forensic psychology and describe how results of the MMPI–2 assist the practitioner in developing hypotheses about the client's behavior and mental health.

7. Report scientific and legal evidence supporting use of the MMPI–2 in neuropsychological, workers' compensation, personal injury, child custody, family violence, and criminal evaluations.
8. Provide a number of case examples to illustrate the utility of the MMPI–2 in court cases. The case studies included in the book are from actual client cases in which the authors served as expert witnesses. In some situations, the case material was provided by their colleagues. In most cases (except for the Unabomber example, in Chapter 14, which is public information), case material was masked to keep the identifying information confidential.
9. Describe computer-based assessment in forensic cases and illustrate the information that computer-generated interpretations can provide in understanding the client's behavior and problems.
10. Provide a useful report writing strategy for communicating test results in court cases.
11. Describe two controversial measures that were derived from MMPI–2 items, the Lees-Haley Fake Bad Scale (Lees-Haley, English, & Glenn, 1991) and the MMPI–2—Restructured Form (MMPI–2–RF; Tellegen & Ben-Porath, 2008), and their relationship to the original MMPI and MMPI–2. These controversial measures are discussed in some detail because examiners who use the MMPI–2–RF measures in court cases can encounter problems. The measures are new and lack validation research, and their use may potentially provide inadequate support for forensic testimony. *Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals* (1993) and its relationship to scientific evidence are discussed in this context.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

To assist readers in locating the resources available in this book, we provide the following map to guide them through information for using the MMPI–2 in various forensic settings.

In the first chapter we provide general information that can be of value to the psychologist in preparation for court testimony using the MMPI–2. Included in this overview are factors associated with MMPI–2 use that are important to consider in using the test in forensic applications: for example, issues related to appropriate test administration, item and scale interpretation,

and report writing and the steps that one can take in the preparation for court testimony. We provide information on test applications in various contexts for use in developing testimony about the MMPI–2.

In the second chapter we give an overview of the important task facing the MMPI–2 test user in determining whether the test results are valid and interpretable. People being evaluated by psychological procedures as part of their testimony in court cases may respond to interview questions or psychological tests in a way meant to influence the outcome of the evaluation. They may respond to items in order to be seen by others as highly virtuous and without problems in an effort to obtain custody of their children; in some criminal cases, clients may respond in a manner suggesting they are mentally disturbed to convince the jury that the crimes for which they are charged were influenced by a mental condition.

The MMPI–2 contains a dozen ways for the psychologist to obtain information on the client's presentation of his or her mental status during the evaluation. The importance of assessing response attitudes in forensic evaluations is presented and the well-established MMPI–2 validity scales are summarized to provide the reader with an overview of this important step in understanding the client's test performance. It is important to note, as we do in this book, that not all scales that have been developed from MMPI–2 items provide valid and important personality-based information on the client. For example, the Fake Bad Scale (*FBS*), which was recently renamed the Symptom Validity Scale (*SVS*) by the test publisher, is currently incorporated in forensic evaluations by some psychologists, and is a questionable measure that can disadvantage clients (by labeling them as faking) although they have genuine physical problems or stress-related mental-health problems. The problems surrounding use of this scale—for example, its questionable developmental procedures and its unacceptability in court—are described in Chapter 2.

This book was developed as an advanced text on the use of the MMPI–2 in specific forensic applications. Although we assume that the reader will have a basic background in the structure of the test, we provide an overview summary of the standard scales of the MMPI–2. We include summary descriptions in Chapter 3 of the MMPI–2 clinical, content, and supplementary scales and code types (combinations of score scales) in order for the reader to have close at hand brief descriptions of the basic MMPI–2 measures discussed in this book.

In a multicultural society such as the United States, court cases frequently involve psychological assessments in which the assessment practitioner and the client are from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, cultural factors in forensic assessment with the MMPI–2, as discussed in Chapter 4, are important variables to appraise and deal with in forensic cases. Cross-cultural variables and the impact they might have on the assessment

must be taken into consideration in forensic assessments. The MMPI-2 has been widely adapted cross-culturally (there are over 33 translations in use around the world). There is substantial research showing the test's effectiveness in assessing people from diverse cultures with carefully adapted translations. Psychologists who use translated versions of the MMPI-2 in their evaluations of foreign-born clients may find that there are appropriate norms that have been developed and used to assess clients in different languages and cultures; for example, Belgium, Chile, China, France, Israel, Korea, Italy, Mexico, Spain, and many others.

Psychological assessment and the application of tests are influenced by the setting in which they are employed. The context in which self-report instruments are used is an important consideration, particularly in forensic evaluations. In this book we provide a review and pertinent research background for the application of the MMPI-2 in seven general forensic settings in which it is frequently used. In Chapter 5 we provide a perspective on the application of the MMPI-2 in neuropsychological assessment—a setting in which the MMPI-2 provides a different perspective on the client's personality and behavioral functioning than other tests usually employed by the neuropsychologist to assess potential neurobehavioral problems.

Two very similar settings in which the MMPI-2 is used to evaluate personality and mental-health symptoms of clients with physical or psychologically based injuries are described in Chapter 6 (for personal injury evaluations) and Chapter 7 (for work compensation evaluations). Clients seeking financial compensation for alleged injuries from accidents or difficult life circumstances (e.g., sexual assault or harassment) are often similar in the response approach. Moreover, many of the client's motivational factors and the environmental contexts across the two settings are similar. However, personal injury and work compensation cases are sufficiently different that we thought it was important to deal with them in separate chapters.

In Chapter 8 we provide a summary and discussion of the use of MMPI-2 in immigration evaluations. This assessment service is increasing greatly in contemporary clinical forensic practice. For example, some psychologists are conducting evaluations on immigrants as part of the evidence presented in hearings by individuals who are seeking immigration relief. Assessments of immigrants often have to be conducted in the language of the client rather than in English. In this chapter we provide a discussion of the legal context in which immigrant evaluations are conducted and discuss issues related to understanding the test results. An example of a typical assessment encountered in immigrant assessments is included to illustrate the relevance of the MMPI-2.

One of the most frequent applications of the MMPI-2 in forensic evaluations is in custody or parent capacity evaluations (see Chapter 9). We

provide a description of the research on using the MMPI-2 in custody evaluations and discuss the issues involved in conducting child custody evaluations. A relevant case illustration is included to demonstrate how the MMPI-2 can provide information pertinent to custody decisions. In a somewhat related discussion in Chapter 10, on using the MMPI-2 in cases of intimate partner violence, we further examine how the MMPI-2 can provide valuable personality information on this client population and highlight the test's contributions with a case example.

One of the earliest applications of the original MMPI and MMPI-2 in forensic settings involved their use in assessment of people in pretrial criminal cases or those serving time in prison. Many of the early studies on the test included personality appraisals of prison populations and people who are being tried on criminal charges in court cases (see Chapter 11, summarizing use of the MMPI-2 in correctional settings). A number of studies were conducted by evaluating prisoners in determining potentially effective approaches for rehabilitation. In this chapter we provide discussion on pretrial MMPI-2 assessments and on research on prison populations to illustrate the test's utility in these cases.

Two of the authors of this book (Butcher and Greene) have developed computer assessment systems based on MMPI-2. They have cooperated in illustrating the applicability of this interpretive approach in Chapter 12, which describes computer-based interpretation in forensic evaluations from their different perspectives. The chapter provides a discussion of computer interpretation and its general acceptability in forensic assessment. It also provides an example of a computer-based evaluation of a client from an international assessment in a criminal case to illustrate its applicability.

In Chapter 13 we provide a discussion of information that is important to include in developing a forensic psychological report that appropriately summarizes an assessment evaluation of the client.

Forensic psychologists might face questions concerning using the MMPI-2 in court cases as a result of the recent publication of another and rather different instrument (i.e., the MMPI-2-RF) using the MMPI-2 item pool and norms developed for the MMPI-2. The use of the same name implies that this new instrument builds upon the tradition of the original MMPI, but it does not. It is a very different instrument, in terms of method and of the results obtained. We address these issues in the final chapter of the book. Chapter 14 is devoted to a description of the MMPI-2-RF and illustrates through case examples and research studies how these two tests differ.

In Chapter 15 we provide a summary and conclusions of the material included in this book.

We hope that the material provided in this forensic guide can assist forensic psychology experts with an updated and effectively workable knowledge

base on MMPI–2 for their practice decisions and contribute to their journey to remain current in psychological assessment. There has been substantial research and development on the MMPI–2 in the past several years. The changes in forensic practice and new developments in research and test development make it necessary for forensic psychologists to be up-to-date and knowledgeable about test-related factors that can influence court testimony.

Many forensic experts feel that there is an unceasing need for current update of research and interpretive strategies based on the MMPI–2, given its broad use. This book was developed to provide the forensic psychologist with MMPI–2 background and to serve this goal in addition to another forensic MMPI–2 book that has been published by the American Psychological Association: *The MMPI, MMPI–2, and MMPI–A in Court: A Practical Guide for Expert Witness and Attorneys* (3rd ed.) by Pope, Butcher, and Seelen, which was last revised in 2006. The present volume should not be viewed as a replacement for the Pope et al. book. Rather, it was developed as a complement to the earlier work as a means of updating the resource and research material on the MMPI–2 that has been published over the last decade. The Pope et al. handbook addresses the legal context in more detail and provides extensive discussion on the legal aspects of test use; for example, it describes the cases in which the MMPI–2 has been included in court decisions. Much of the information described in the Pope et al. handbook is still relevant and is not included here. This book looks more extensively at the application of the test in specific forensic applications and includes past and current research supporting the test.

We now turn our attention to the discussion of general factors for using the MMPI–2 in forensic cases.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

The authors provide the following information concerning their financial involvement with the MMPI products:

James N. Butcher served on the MMPI–2 Restandardization Committee to develop the MMPI–2 and MMPI–Adolescent (MMPI–A). The three members of the original committee, James Butcher, W. Grant Dahlstrom, and John R. Graham, chose not to receive any royalties from the sales of the MMPI–2 and MMPI–A test booklets and manuals, manual supplements, scoring materials, profile sheets, and the like. These authors wrote new items and revised original MMPI items for the MMPI–2 and MMPI–A. They collected the normative sample used in the norm development for the MMPI–2 and MMPI–A and clinical data sets used to validate the revised scales between 1982 and 1989. Butcher co-created several scales for the MMPI–2, such as the content scales; the MMPI–A content scales; the Superlative

Self-Presentation, or S, scale; and the four alcohol and drug problem scales, the MMPI-2 APS and AAS, the MMPI-A ACK and PRO. Butcher also was the co-creator of nine translations of the MMPI or MMPI-2, and he does not receive any royalties for those works. Members of the MMPI Restandardization Committee agreed to forgo any royalties on the new versions of the MMPI resulting from the committee's work during the restandardization project. Butcher does receive royalty payments for some of the books he has published on the MMPI and MMPI-2, although the royalties on some books were donated to the MMPI-2 Symposium and Workshop Series that he directed for 38 years. Butcher receives royalty payment for his development of the Minnesota Reports, a computer-based interpretation system for the MMPI-2 and MMPI-A.

Giselle A. Hass does not have an affiliation with any MMPI-2 products or books published previously and does not receive any royalties related to the MMPI-2. To the best of her knowledge, she owns no stocks or bonds in companies publishing psychological tests.

Roger L. Greene has published several books on personality assessment and the MMPI. He published an interpretive manual for the MMPI-2/MMPI-2-RF and a computer interpretive program for the MMPI-2 and for the MMPI-2-RF from which he receives royalties.

Linda D. Nelson does not have an affiliation with any MMPI-2 products or books published previously and does not receive any royalties related to the MMPI-2. To the best of her knowledge, she owns no stocks or bonds in companies publishing psychological tests.