

Interpretation of MMPI-2 Validity Scales

Why is it Important to Assess Validity?

- Under certain circumstances impression management or distortion is common
 - Seeking access to costly treatments
 - Employment screening
 - Disability evaluations
 - Personal Injury
 - Court ordered evaluations
 - Competency
 - Mitigating circumstances
 - Not Guilty by reason of diminished capacity
 - Custody

Advantage of MMPI-2: Validity Scales

- Provide information regarding the accuracy of self-report
- Indicate the extent of distortion
 - Provides a dimensional perspective
 - Relative to others taking the MMPI-2 under similar circumstances or how distorted is the self-report of symptoms and behaviors?
- Specifies the type of distortion or impression management
- Interpretation of Substantive Scales is based on information collected from individuals accurately reporting clinical state
 - Allows confidence in the clinical inferences made from the MMPI-2 based on the substantive scales.

Threats to Profile Validity

- Non-Content-Based Invalid Responding
 - Non-Responding
 - Leaving items blank or responding both T and F to same item
 - Random Responding
 - Intentional
 - Unintentional
 - » Reading Difficulties
 - » Comprehension
 - » Confusion
 - Fixed Responding
 - Acquiescence (yea saying)
 - Counter-Aquiescence (nay saying)

Threats to Profile Validity cont.

– Content-Based Invalid Responding

- Over-Reporting
 - “faking bad” by reporting non existent signs and symptoms or distorting the severity of symptoms.
 - Intentional
 - » Exaggeration versus Fabrication
 - Unintentional
 - » Highly Distressed and seeking help
- Under-Reporting
 - “faking good” or defensiveness
 - Intentional
 - » Minimization versus Denial
 - Unintentional
 - » Ego Defenses
 - » Social Desirability

Assessing Protocol Validity with the MMPI-2

<u>Threat</u>	<u>Scale(s)</u>
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Non-Content-Based

Non-responding	CNS
Random Responding	VRIN
Fixed Responding	TRIN

Content-Based

Over-Reporting	F, F _B , F _p , FBS
Under-Reporting	L, K, S

Cannot Say (CNS)

- A 567-Item “Scale”
- Possible Reasons for Elevation:
 - Lack of cooperation & defensiveness
 - Lack of insight
 - Obsessiveness
 - Reading difficulties
 - Confusion
- Effects on Profile:
 - Deflated score
 - Depend upon location
 - If 90% of items endorsed on a scale, little impact on predictive validity of the scale.

VRIN (Variable Response Inconsistency)

- Designed to Detect Random Responding
 - Item content either similar or opposite in content
- 47 Item Pairs, 12 Can Be Scored Two Ways
- T-Scores Range from 30 to 120
- Applications
 - Detection of random responding
 - $VRIN \geq 80$ Profile uninterpretable
 - Detection of “hypervigilance”
 - $VRIN < 40$
 - Aid in the interpretation of infrequency scales

TRIN (True Response Inconsistency)

- Designed to Detect Fixed Responding (Acquiescence or Counter-Acquiescence)
- 20 pairs opposite in content, 3 Symmetrically scored (both T or both F)
- Raw Score Converted to T-Score Which Will Always be Equal to or Greater Than 50
- A T-Score Greater Than 50 Will be Followed by a “T” or an “F”
- A fixed response set indicated if
 - $TRIN \geq 80T$ OR $TRIN \geq 80F$
- Applications
 - Detection of fixed responding
 - Difficulty reading/comprehension
 - Oppositionality
 - Interpretation of L, K and S

F

- Used to Identify Over-Reporting
- 60 “infrequently endorsed” items among first 370 items in the booklet
- Possible Reasons for Elevation
 - Intentional Over-reporting
 - Random responding
 - Fixed Responding
 - Severe psychopathology or severe distress
 - Unintentional over-reporting
- Use VRIN to evaluate random responding
- Use TRIN to evaluate fixed responding
- Use F_p to evaluate intentional over-reporting

F_B

- Designed to detect changes in responding between first and second half of the test
- 40 infrequently endorsed items appearing in second half of booklet
- Possible reasons for elevation
 - Intentional over-reporting
 - Random responding
 - Fixed responding
 - Severe psychopathology or severe distress
 - Unintentional over-reporting
 - Fatigue
- If T-score $F_B > T\text{-score } F+20$, significant change in responding occurred

F_P

(Infrequency-psychopathology)

- Designed to detect intentional over-reporting in individuals with psychopathology
- 27 items endorsed infrequently by a variety of clinical samples including psychiatric inpatients
- Possible Reasons for Elevation:
 - Intentional Over-reporting
 - Random Responding
 - Fixed Responding

F_p (Infrequency-psychopathology)

- If $F_p \geq 100$ AND $VRIN < 70$ AND $TRIN < 70$, intentional over-reporting is indicated.
- If F is elevated AND $F_p < 70$, the elevated score on F likely reflects severe pathology, distress, or unintentional over-reporting
- $F_p > 70$ and < 100 reflects degree of exaggeration of symptoms

Symptom Validity Scale (FBS)

- 43 item rationally derived scale based on item endorsement frequencies in individuals undergoing assessment based on disability/personal injury claims.
- The scale assesses somatic concerns, unusual beliefs, and deviant attitudes.
- $T \geq 100$ associated with low false positive rate and indicative of non-credible presentation especially of cognitive impairment.
- Possible reasons for the elevations are inconsistent responding and/or overreporting of somatic or cognitive symptoms.

Uncommon Virtues (L) Scale

- Designed to detect intentional under-reporting
 - Claiming an unusual number of uncommon virtues
- 15 obvious items
- All keyed “false”
- Possible reasons for elevation:
 - Intentional under-reporting
 - Lack of insight
 - Very traditional
 - Indiscriminant “false” responding
- If L is elevated can not assume lack of elevation on MMPI-2 substantive scales is associated with the absence of psychopathology

K Scale

- Designed to detect unintentional under-reporting
 - Claim to be well adjusted and free of psychopathology
- 30 “subtle” items
- All but one keyed “false”
- Possible reasons for elevation
 - Defensiveness
 - Psychological well-being
- In clinical settings if K is elevated, can not assume absence of elevations on substantive scales is associated with absence of psychopathology.

Superlative Self-Presentation (S)

- Developed by Butcher and Han (1995) to identify under-reporting with the entire MMPI-2 item pool
- 50 items, 44 keyed False
- Contains subscales to assist in identifying specific areas of defensiveness:
 - Belief in human goodness
 - Serenity
 - Contentment with life
 - Patience and denial of irritability and anger
 - Denial of moral flaws