

Low MMPI 6-Pa Scale Profiles

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From: Michael Karson <mckarson@MSN.COM>

Subject: Re: Low MMPI-2 scores

To: PSYLAW-L@LISTSERV.UNL.EDU

Perhaps a paragraph I wrote about Factor L (Vigilance) of the 16PF is relevant:

Naivete is another common form of paranoia. Indeed, the MMPI-2 subscales for 6-Pa include persecution, poignancy, and naivete. Naivete plays a role in paranoia because in its pathological form, naivete depends on the denial and projective avoidance or expulsion of hostility. To be extremely trusting, people have to be exceedingly unaware of and unprepared for hostility. This level of denial may extend to their own hostilities as well. Very low scores on Vigilance (L), however, may not indicate pathological naivete so much as an effort to make a good impression, or a non-pathological belief in the goodness of others. Still, very low scores should at least be considered as possible paranoid markers, especially if there is a psychosocial history that contradicts the professed level of trust (e.g., arrests, outbursts of rage, achievement in a competitive field). It has been said that Othello's tragic flaw was not jealousy at all, but a blind trust that left him ill-prepared for his suspicions.

[ENDNOTE: Factor L does not typically correlate with the MMPI's Scale 6-Pa (cite). This is not surprising, since Pa is composed of both prosecutory and naive subscales. Further, MMPIers suggest interpreting both high scores and very low scores on Pa as indicative of paranoia, a possibility we are raising for Factor L as well.]