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From: law and psychology discussion list
[mailto:PSYLAWS-L@crcvms.unl.edu] On Behalf Of Stephen Bloomfield
Sent: Tuesday, December 11, 2001 4:29 AM
To: PSYLAWS-L@crcvms.unl.edu
Subject: Re: The Exner Rorschach in great shape?

In a message dated 12/10/2001 7:52:17 PM Eastern Standard Time,
jawood@UTEP.EDU writes:

As Michael Karson pointed out yesterday, the evidence is good for Rorschach measures of (a) form quality and (b) deviant verbalizations and thought disorder. Virtually all the other scales lack convincing evidence of validity.

I am not attempting to enter the controversy/un-controversy issue.
Nevertheless, do have a short question. If Michael is correct, then using the Rorschach in forensic cases for these purposes, not a CS interpretation, should stand the test ?
Steve Broomfield

Dear Steve,

I think that Rorschach measure of form quality and thought disorder is promising, and could meet the Daubert-Joiner-Kumho standard.

However, I doubt that any do now. Let me mention the top contenders and show what I mean.

Most Promising Measures of Form Quality: X+, X-%, and other similar indices from the Comprehensive System ---

Problem is that the norms are off by about two standard deviations.

Scoring reliability for X-% appears to be low sometimes, though X+% is ok.

Martin Mayman's form quality approach ---

Problem is that there are no norms, and there's been little validity research on this for years. Therefore, we don't know how the scores relate to current Diagnoses of schizophrenia, etc. I agree with Michael Karson that Mayman's approach was good, and there were studies in the 1960s that showed scoring reliability could be good (with adequate training). However, how reliable is the "average psychologist" who uses this approach many decades after leaving graduate school? Research on this is needed. Perceptual Aberration Scale (PAS) of Wagner's "The Logical Rorschach" looks promising. Ed Wagner just published "The Logical Rorschach" with Western Psychological Services, and he reports promising psychometric properties. Needs more work, however, and verification by independent researchers. Furthermore, the norms are still rough (based on relatively small, non-random samples of normal subjects). Only a few peer-reviewed studies on this.

Most Promising Measures of Thought Disorder/Deviant Verbalizations:

Holzman's Thought Disorder Index (TDI) Well validated, nicely done. No norms though. And no studies on whether scoring reliability remains adequate among clinicians in the field.

WSum6 (Comprehensive System) Validity data ok. Norms are "off" and over-pathologize.

Scoring reliability (.70-. 80) is below the level that Heilbrun recommends for forensic tests.

Wagner's four autisms (TETRAUT) This also appears in Wagner's newly published "The Logical Rorschach." Very promising data, though needs more work (see comments above on PAS).

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Looking these over, it appears that the main problem (from the perspective of the Daubert standards) is unknown error rates (no norms or inadequate norms, scoring reliability not

studied enough, limited contemporary validity evidence). This is a problem that could quickly be remedied, if Rorschach researchers were to concentrate their energies on these scales, which are the most promising.

I want to mention Ed Wagner's "The Logical Rorschach" again, because I think this is the way the Rorschach should be going. Ed Wagner provides a practical method for scoring ONLY TWO Rorschach variables: Form Quality (PAS) and Thought Disorder (TETRAUT). Scoring is much quicker and simpler than with the CS, which can be very time-consuming and cumbersome. As I said, more work is needed. But Ed's approach is exemplary. If anyone wants to check it out, the book can be ordered from Western Psychological Services (310-478-2061).

Jim