



Introduction

The set of articles published in this special issue offer a **high-level review of a number of the psychological assessment measures practitioners use in legal.**

Some papers in this special issue concern instruments that are heavily used but controversial (i.e., the Rorschach Inkblot Test), those that are newer but likely to be heavily used in forensic settings (i.e., MMPI-3), those that are perhaps appropriate for some psycholegal questions but inappropriate for others (e.g., the PCL-R, MCMI-IV), and others (i.e., the PAI, SIRS-2, HCR-20V3, TTSI, MacCAT-CA, ECST-R, and the CAST-MR).

These articles offer clarity about strengths & weaknesses of a number of instruments to **inform psychologists' preparation for expert testimony, lawyers' preparation for direct and cross-examination, judges' evidence admissibility determinations, and scholars' future research.**

Teams of authors were assembled with different perspectives & areas of expertise to review each tool fairly, including several adversarial collaborations - a great tool for the advancement of knowledge. To increase visibility, accessibility, & impact, **the articles are published as free access, meaning available to download without charge.**

Method

We asked each author team to follow a general format:

- Summarize and critically evaluate data about **how the psychological assessment tool is used in legal settings** (including how it is sometimes inappropriately used, if applicable);
- Summarize data on **how commonly the tool is used**, including comparative data across countries, if applicable;
- Summarize any **legal admissibility challenges** the tool faced and the outcomes of such challenges;
- Critically evaluate the **psychometric findings** about the tool's performance, especially in forensic populations, if known;
- Identify the data that are needed in order to **increase the credibility** of the tool in court;
- Offer recommendations for **how to effectively cross-examine** the use of the tool;
- Provide an expert opinion about **whether the tool is likely to meet legal admissibility criteria**, with justification.

Results

Assessments & Tools Reviewed

CLINICAL MEASURES AND ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES	RORSCHACH & R-PAS (Rorschach Performance Assessment System)
	MMPI-3 (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-3)
	PAI (Personality Assessment Inventory)
	PAI-A (Personality Assessment Inventory-Adolescent)
	MCMI-IV (Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-IV)
FORENSICALLY RELEVANT INSTRUMENTS	TSI-2 (Trauma Symptom Inventory-2)
	SIRS-2 (Structured Interview of Reported Symptoms-2 nd Edition)
	PCL-R (Psychopathy Checklist-Revised)
FORENSIC ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS	HCR-20 ^{V3} (Historical Clinical Risk Management-20)
	ECST-R (The Evaluation of Competency to Stand Trial-Revised)
	MacCAT-CA (The MacArthur Competence Assessment Tool-Criminal Adjudication)
	CAST-MR (Competence Assessment for Standing Trial for Defendants with Mental Retardation)

CHALLENGES IN COURT

Some articles ended up with a stronger clinical focus and a lesser focus on law (e.g., the MCMI-IV/MACI-II article) whereas others were more law-focused with a lesser focus on the clinical concepts (e.g., the PAI article).

The articles that conducted case law reviews **generally found that the tools were rarely challenged in court, replicating previous findings** (Neal et al., 2019). These consistent findings emerged despite different methodologies such as years included, tools studied, search methods, analytic methods, and legal databases used (e.g., Westlaw, NexisUni, European Union e-Justice website).

The overall gist of the findings was that **few admissibility challenges seemed to be raised against psychological assessment methods, and that when they were raised, they tended not to be successful.**

DISCREPANCY WITH PRACTITIONERS

These findings stand in contrast to survey data from practitioners: Line (2020) found 38% of attorneys reported they had raised a challenge to psychological assessment evidence in practice at any point in their career, and 52% reported having seen another attorney raise a challenge to psychological assessment evidence.

Line also found that 41% of forensic psychologists reported they had experienced a challenge to their psychological assessment evidence, and 33% reported they knew colleagues who had experienced challenges.

These data suggest challenges to psychological assessment evidence are happening, despite the fact that few challenges are discoverable through reviews of published (and unpublished) case law.

Recommendations

This special issue encourages **critical thinking** about psychological assessment methods.

We recommend that clinicians continue to **evaluate the strengths and weaknesses** of various assessment tools and educate themselves on this research when conducting work in legal settings.

We also recommend that lawyers, judges and others working in the legal system **educate themselves** about these methods so that they may utilize them more appropriately (or challenge an opponent's inappropriate use of them) within the justice system.

If clinicians, lawyers, and judges do not educate themselves about these tools (including their strengths and weaknesses), reliable data could be excluded and invalid data could be admitted into evidence. Both errors could result in devastating miscarriages of justice in criminal sentencing, child custody disputes, and other life-altering events.

Conclusions

This special issue highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the psychometric evidence base for a number of psychological measures.

As expected, no measure was entirely reliable or entirely unreliable in all settings. Clinicians must consider this data when choosing assessment tools to use, and legal practitioners must educate themselves about these assessments to make more accurate determinations of legal admissibility.

The special issue contributes to the field by examining the strengths and weaknesses of many of the most common psychometric tools used in legal settings. We hope it will also contribute to the psychological field by inspiring further inquiry into other psychometric evaluations, and contribute to the legal field by encouraging a more robust legal inquiry into psychometric measures that are often left unchallenged.

