

Psychological assessment and tests

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Psychology

- describes, analyses and explores causal and logical connection of mental phenomena and attempts to explain them
- not only limited to medicine (e.g. psychology of management in a company, forensic psychology)
- Activities of clinical psychology include

Psychological assessment

In general

- assessment of basic characteristics and behavior (personality functioning)
- not only limited to pathology
- aims to reveal the nature and causes of mental disorders
- includes the psychological tests

What is assessed?

- Personality features
- premorbid functioning of cognitive abilities
- Psychopathology (qualitatively and quantitatively)
- Their causes (innate x acquired, functional x organic...)
- Prognosis (reversible x permanent)

Methods of Psychological assessment

Observation

- short-term x long-term, spontaneous x forced (e.g. when doing something)
- introspection (self) x extrospection (we observe someone)
- everything: facial expressions, speaking, emotions, appearance, what strikes out...

Interview

- diagnostic x therapeutic x anamnestic x research x counselling
- more or less structured types of interviews
- Anamnesis: detailed exploration of the past of the patient

Psychological tests

- standardized, objective, reliable
- Interpretation: based on statistical norms

Types of tests

Performance methods

- Test of specific abilities
- e.g. intelligence tests (IQ), others: memory, attention, spatial imagination, verbal and numerical abilities
- The most widely used unidimensional tests of intelligence are **Kohs Block Design Test**, Raven Progressive Matrices and similar methods. Among multidimensional (complex) methods we usually find Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children (WISC-III) and Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scales (WAIS-III, WAIS-R),

Intelligence Structure Test (I-S-T), Vienna Matrices Test (WMT), Bochum Matrices Test (BOMAT), etc. Unidimensional tests assess specific aspects of performance, such as creativity, technical, verbal, mathematic or artistic abilities.

Projective methods

- ambiguous stimulus or stimulation → projection aspects of his own personality (Rorschach method) → Exner's CS for evaluation
- E.g. Rorschach inkblot method
 - relationship between personality features and interpretation of visual stimuli → generates both quantitative and qualitative data into a coherent picture of patient's functioning
 - The test consists of 10 cards with various chromatic and achromatic, symmetric inkblots
 - we study apperception styles, determinants, contents, originality of responses, thinking quality
- e.g. Word association test, Rorschach inkblot method

Questionnaires

- rely on introspection of the patient
- e.g. Neurotic questionnaire (N5), Eysenck personality questionnaire (EPI)
- "Negatives": tendencies to lie, intentional and unintentional misrepresentation of examinee's experience
- can be unidimensional or multidimensional

Neuropsychological assessment

- studies relationships between the brain and behavior, brain structure and its functions
- e.g. MMSE, Adenbrook's cognitive examination, clock drawing test

Psychological report

- integrates all the findings
- shed light on a specific differential diagnostic question, or in order to reveal the patient's personality structure, pathology or to predict probability of certain behaviors and experiences in the patient
- provides information about these areas of the patient's functioning: personality structure, affects, relational aspect of patient's functioning, self-perception, intellect structure and level, presence and depth of psychopathology.
- has an objective part: personal, anamnestic data, symptoms
- and a more subjective part: interpretation of this data, categorization and comparison with Norms

Scope of Clinical Psychology

- Psychological assessment (see above)
- Psychotherapy
- Education
- Consultations for professionals in other medical fields,
- Medical counseling
- Forensic psychological assessment in the area of civil and criminal law
- Research
- Teaching

Links

Related Articles

Bibliography

References

- Psychology Lecture, Pavel Harsa January 2021