

Chapter 3

Using the MMPI–2–RF in Preemployment Evaluations of Police Officer Candidates

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ABSTRACT

The MMPI-2 Restructured Form (MMPI-2-RF) is the current, most up-to-date version of the most widely used self-report measure of personality and psychopathology. Prior versions of the test were studied and used extensively in police candidate assessments. This chapter reviews the legal and empirical foundations for using the MMPI-2-RF in preemployment evaluations of police officer candidates and provides practical guidance for doing so. A detailed review of a series of recent studies on using the MMPI-2-RF in identification of high risk candidates is presented, followed by practical suggestions for integrating MMPI-2-RF findings with other sources of information when conducting preemployment evaluations of police candidates. The MMPI-2-RF Police Candidate Interpretive Report is highlighted.

DISCLOSURES

Yossef S. Ben-Porath is a paid consultant to the MMPI Publisher, the University of Minnesota, and Distributor, Pearson. As co-author of the MMPI-2-RF he receives royalties on sales of the test. Along with David M. Corey he is co-author of the MMPI-2-RF Police Candidate Interpretive Report (PCIR) and receives royalties on its sales. He has also received research funding from the test publisher.

David M. Corey is a co-author of the MMPI-2-RF PCIR and receives royalties on sales of the report and has received research funding from the Publisher.

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INTRODUCTION

The MMPI-2 Restructured Form (MMPI-2-RF; Ben-Porath & Tellegen, 2008/2011; Tellegen & Ben-Porath, 2008/2011) is the current, most up-to-date version of the most widely used self-report measure of personality and psychopathology. Prior versions of the test¹ were studied and used extensively in police candidate assessments. Building on the initial work of Sellbom, Fischler, and Ben-Porath (2007), over the past several years a series of studies has provided a comprehensive empirical foundation for using the MMPI-2-RF in these evaluations (Detrick, Ben-Porath, & Sellbom, 2015; Detrick & Chibnall, 2014; Taescavage, Brewster, Corey, & Ben-Porath, 2015; Taescavage, Corey, & Ben-Porath 2015; Taescavage, Corey, & Ben-Porath, 2016; Taescavage, Corey, Gupton, & Ben-Porath, 2015; Taescavage, Fischler, Cappo, Hill, Corey, & Ben-Porath, 2015). This research has also been incorporated in the Police Candidate Interpretive Report (PCIR; Corey & Ben-Porath, 2014), a computer-generated interpretive report designed to assist police candidate evaluators.

This chapter is intended to inform the reader about the legal and empirical foundations for using the MMPI-2-RF in preemployment evaluations of police officer candidates and provide practical guidance in this area. We begin with a review of the legal matters related to using clinical assessment measures such as the MMPI in preemployment evaluations of police candidates. The second section includes a historical review of the literature on use of the Original MMPI and MMPI-2 in police candidate assessments. The third section provides a detailed discussion of the MMPI-2-RF literature just described. The final section provides recommendations for integrating MMPI-2-RF findings in general, and PCIR results in particular, with other sources of information when evaluating police candidates.

LEGAL MATTERS

Psychologists who use the MMPI in the conduct of police officer candidate preemployment evaluations should be aware of the laws and regulations governing this practice, recognizing that whereas federal laws and regulations apply throughout the U.S., individual states may, and often do, have their own complementary requirements. The following discussion of these legal matters should be viewed as an orientation to the topic, not legal advice, which should be sought from one's own legal counsel. We focus here on two primary federal laws that impact use of the MMPI tests in assessments of police officer candidates throughout the U.S. -- the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and the Civil Rights Act (1964, 1991). A more detailed discussion of these and other federal and national laws and guidelines is presented by Spilberg and Corey (2014).

Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

Prior to passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), federal and state laws were largely silent on the matter of using clinical assessment devices such as the MMPI in evaluations of police officer candidates. With enactment of the ADA, this legal landscape changed considerably. Title I of the ADA applies strict limits on (but does not prohibit) making disability-related medical inquiries of job candidates (ADA, 1990), including ones that *may*² reveal a mental disability. These restrictions also apply to professionals retained or employed by police agencies to conduct preemployment evaluations. Under the ADA, an examination is deemed medical if, among other factors, it seeks information

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