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Detection of Malingering on the Luria-Nebraska Neuropsychological Battery: An Initial and Cross-validation

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A formula for detecting faked LNNB profiles was validated on 68 experimental malingerers and adequately motivated patients matched on education, age, and severity of profile. The formula was then cross-validated on 51 malingerers and 202 patients. The formula yielded a cross-validated 23% false negative rate and a 9% false positive rate, for an overall hit rate of 88%. If normal and profoundly impaired profiles are eliminated from the cross-validation analysis, the false negative rate is 17% and the false positive rate 7%, for an overall hit rate of 91%. © 1997 National Academy of Neuropsychology. Published by Elsevier Science Ltd

David Faust (Faust, 1996; Faust, Ziskin, & Hiers, 1991) has documented the need for detection of malingering on neuropsychological batteries. Adults (Heaton, Smith, Lehman, & Vogt, 1978), adolescents (Faust, Hart, Guilmette, & Arkes, 1988b), and children (Faust, Hart, & Guilmette, 1988a) are quite capable of faking neuropsychological deficits on the Halstead-Reitan Battery (HRB). The Luria-Nebraska Neuropsychological Battery (LNNB) has like-

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wise been demonstrated to be vulnerable to malingering by adults (Anderson, 1984; Conley, 1985; Mensch, 1983; Mensch & Woods, 1986), who did not need special instructional sets or incentives to provide abnormal profiles.

However, none of these studies provided a formula that could accurately detect malingerers. The LNNB studies were conclusive in demonstrating that, while fakers were not identical to adequately motivated patients, there was considerable overlap. Consequently, the malingerers could not be accurately distinguished from the true patients via decision rules that work well in differentiating normals from people with true neuropsychological deficits. Part of the reason the LNNB studies were unable to provide a decision rule that would identify malingerers was due to their small N (Mensch $N = 32$, Conley $N = 15$, Anderson $N = 29$). The present authors therefore agreed to pool the data and add more subjects for a reanalysis, using the experimental method rather than the "differential prevalence" design decried by Richard Rogers and colleagues (Rogers, Harrel, & Liff, 1993).

METHOD

Subjects

The Malingering group consisted of 85 adults from Delaware (Mensch, 1983) ($n = 30$), Oklahoma State University ($n = 15$), and the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC: $n = 40$). Age range was 18 to 65, ($M = 32.6$, $SD = 12$). Level of education was 12 to 20, ($M = 14.25$, $SD = 2.4$). Critical Level (age \times education) range was 45.8 to 65, ($M = 55$, $SD = 3.7$). All subjects were screened for organicity via careful neuropsychological interviews. In addition, Mensch's group was given the LNNB under standard conditions in a counter-balanced design, and all were able to produce a normal profile.

The true Patient group consisted of 236 people who had been referred for neuropsychological assessment. Thirty-eight Ss were enrolled in a neuropsychological rehabilitation program. They had well-documented head injuries and were given the LNNB as a baseline measure upon their already approved entry into the program. Thus, they had no motivation whatsoever to fake the test. The remaining 198 were culled from the files of a private practice. They also had no discernible motivation (such as pending litigation) to fake the LNNB. Their final diagnoses included: head trauma (8), neoplasm (1), infection (1), CVAs (21), degenerative disease (76), epilepsy (9), hydrocephalus (3), metabolic/toxic (10), congenital (4), psychiatric (40), none (3) and other (22). A deliberate attempt was made to include this broad range of diagnoses in order to make the results generalizable to the caseload of a diverse neuropsychological practice.

The Patient group's years of education ranged from 0 to 20, ($M = 12$, $SD = 3.8$). Their ages ranged from 13 to 91, ($M = 50.2$, $SD = 19.9$). Critical Levels (age \times education) ranged from 48.6 to 83.78, ($M = 61.68$, $SD = 6.9$).

Procedure

All Ss were given the LNNB (Form I). The test was administered according to the instructions given in the manual (Golden, Purisch, & Hammeke, 1985), although the Mensch and Conley Ss were given the LNNB (Form I) according to the instructions given in the previous manual (Golden, Hammeke, & Purisch, 1980).

Mensch's malingering group was given the LNNB in a counter-balanced design under both standard and faking instructions. He and a Master's-level psychologist (both trained in neuropsychological assessment) administered the tests, blind as to instruction group. His

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