



## Screening for offenders with an intellectual disability: The validity of the Learning Disability Screening Questionnaire

Karen McKenzie<sup>a,\*</sup>, Amanda Michie<sup>b</sup>, Aja Murray<sup>c</sup>, Charlene Hales<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Clinical Psychology, University of Edinburgh, Teviot Place, Edinburgh EH8 9AG, UK

<sup>b</sup> Clinical Psychology, NHS Lothian, Morningside Place, Edinburgh EH10 5HF, UK

<sup>c</sup> Psychology, University of Edinburgh, 7 George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9JZ, UK

<sup>d</sup> Middlesex University Archway campus, Highgate Hill, Furnival Building, London N19 5LW, UK

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 30 November 2011

Accepted 5 December 2011

Available online 11 January 2012

#### Keywords:

Screening

Intellectual disability

Learning Disability Screening Questionnaire

Forensic

### ABSTRACT

The study assessed the validity of an intellectual disability screening tool, the Learning Disability Screening Questionnaire (LDSQ), in three forensic settings: a community intellectual disability forensic service; a forensic in-patient secure unit and a prison, using data for 94 individuals. A significant positive relationship was found between full scale IQ and LDSQ score, indicating convergent validity. Discriminative validity was indicated by, firstly, a significant difference in the LDSQ scores between those with and without an intellectual disability, with those with a diagnosis of intellectual disability, scoring significantly lower. Secondly, a ROC analysis indicated that the sensitivity and specificity of the LDSQ were both above 80%. The screening tool was found to have lower sensitivity in the forensic populations than was obtained in the original community standardisation sample, but had slightly higher specificity. Limitations and implications of the study are discussed.

© 2011 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

### 1. Introduction

The needs of people with an intellectual disability who come in contact with criminal justice services are increasingly being highlighted. A range of recent papers and reports suggest that many such individuals are disadvantaged and discriminated against at all stages of the journey through criminal justice systems from first arrest, through trial, sentencing, detention and probation (Søndenaa, Palmstierna, & Iversen, 2010; Talbot, 2008); are more likely to receive differential treatment (Cockram, 2005) and to be restrained and segregated compared with the general prison population (Prison Reform Trust, 2009). Offenders with an intellectual disability may also have disproportionately high suicide rates in prison (Fazel, Xenitidis, & Powell, 2008) and are at risk of exploitation and victimisation (Talbot, 2008). This not only impacts negatively on the individual (Gray, Forell, & Clarke, 2009) but also results in a number of unwelcome consequences for organisations, including the potential for compensation claims due to a breach of human rights and failure to provide adequate support (Talbot, 2008).

One of the main barriers to providing adequate support is the failure to recognise that a person has an intellectual disability in the first place. Intellectual disability consists of three criteria: significant impairments in general intellectual functioning (i.e. an IQ of less than 70); significant impairments in adaptive functioning; onset before age 18 (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; British Psychological Society [BPS], 2001). Diagnosis is made using

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +44 0131 651 3953; fax: +44 0131 651 3971.

E-mail addresses: drkmckenzie@hotmail.com, kmckenzi@staffmail.ed.ac.uk (K. McKenzie).

individually administered, standardised, valid and reliable assessments of intelligence (BPS, 2001) and adaptive functioning, as well as taking a developmental history to ascertain if the impairments occurred before adulthood. As an intellectual assessment can only be carried out by appropriately qualified applied psychologists or by someone under their supervision (BPS, 2001), the diagnostic process can be time-consuming and expensive. This means it is unlikely that a comprehensive assessment of intellectual disability will routinely take place at the early stages of the criminal justice process, for example, on arrest.

There is also significant confusion about what an intellectual disability is, with different terminology being used in different countries. For example, the term used in the United Kingdom (UK) is 'learning disability' whereas this term is commonly used to describe those with specific learning difficulties, e.g. dyslexia, in the US. Many professionals and social care staff, including those employed in intellectual disability services, may lack a full understanding about what an intellectual disability is and the needs and characteristics of the heterogeneous group of people who have this diagnosis (McKenzie, Matheson, Patrick, Paxton, & Murray 2000; Rae, McKenzie, & Murray, 2011; Williams, McKenzie, & McKenzie, 2009). It is perhaps, therefore, unsurprising that staff in the criminal justice system may also lack this knowledge (Scheyett, Vaughn, Taylor, & Parish, 2009).

These issues, amongst others (see Herrington, 2009; Lindsay, Hastings, Griffiths, & Hayes 2007; Søndena, Rasmussen, & Nøttestad, 2008 for overviews), make determining the exact prevalence of those with an intellectual disability who come into contact with criminal justice services difficult. Despite this, there appears to be a growing consensus that the numbers are not insignificant. A review of prevalence studies carried out since 2006 by Søndena et al. (2008), suggested prevalence rates which range from 7.1 to 20%, while a systematic review by Fazel et al. (2008) of 10 papers, found prevalence rates ranged from 0 to 2.8%. This latter review aimed only to include studies which based determination of intellectual disability on all three criteria, but found that a number of studies did not provide information on adaptive functioning. Unfortunately only very few studies (e.g. Hayes, Shackell, Mottram, & Lancaster, 2007) assess intellectual disability taking account of all three criteria. A review of early research by McBrien (2003) found that no studies used all three criteria, none assessed both intellectual and adaptive functioning using full standardised assessments although one (Mason & Murphy, 2002a) assessed these two criteria, but used a short-form intellectual assessment.

The use of short-form and abbreviated intellectual assessments do, however, have a number of potential limitations when used with people with an intellectual disability, which suggests that prevalence rates based on their use may not be entirely accurate. For example, the *Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI: Wechsler, 1999)* includes only a small standardisation sample of people with an intellectual disability, who have an intellectual profile which is unlikely to be representative of the wider population of people with an intellectual disability (Paxton, McKenzie, & Murray, 2008; Wechsler, 1999).

The difficulties of carrying out full assessments combined with the urgent need to identify individuals with an intellectual disability at an early stage in criminal justice proceedings, have led to an increasing call for the systematic use of screening assessments (Department of Health [DoH], 2009; Talbot, 2008). Professional bodies also recognise that there can be pragmatic reasons for using screening tools, especially in situations where there are limited psychology resources (e.g. BPS, 2003). The aim of screening tools in criminal justice services is to provide an indication as to whether someone is likely to have an intellectual disability or not. As with any good assessment tool, good screening tools, need to have strong psychometric properties, including reliability, validity, standardisation with the group it is designed to be used with (Glascoe, 2005) and measurement invariance (MacLean, McKenzie, Kidd, Murray, & Schwannauer, 2011). It should also be quick and straightforward to use and have good sensitivity and specificity. In relation to people with an intellectual disability, the former is the probability that a person who has an intellectual disability (a true positive) will be correctly identified by the assessment, while the latter is the probability that a person who does not have an intellectual disability (a true negative) is correctly identified as such. Values ranging between 70 and 80% are generally considered to be acceptable for sensitivity while 80% or above are preferred for specificity (Glascoe, 2005). The positive and negative predictive power of the assessment can also provide an indication of its utility (Glascoe, 2005). When considering individuals with an intellectual disability, the former is the proportion of those who are indicated by the assessment as having an intellectual disability who actually do. The latter is the proportion of those who are indicated by the assessment as not having an intellectual disability, who do not have one.

There have been a number of studies which have examined the utility of using a range of screening assessments to identify people with an intellectual disability at various stages of the criminal justice process, including in prisons (e.g. Hayes, 2002; Søndena et al., 2010) and probation services (e.g. Mason & Murphy, 2002b). This work has suggested that screening tools may offer a useful means of indicating whether an individual is likely to have an intellectual disability or not and of highlighting the need for further assessment and additional support. There are, however, a number of potential limitations with these studies. For example, sensitivity and specificity values do not always fall within the generally accepted ranges (e.g. Hayes, 2002), although these values are influenced by the use to which the screening assessment is being put and whether it is more detrimental to have false positives or false negatives (Charman et al., 2007). In addition, determination of intellectual disability is frequently made on the basis of intellectual assessment alone. This, in turn is often based on short form assessments (e.g. Søndena et al., 2010) which, as was discussed above, may have limitations when used with people with an intellectual disability.

A screening tool that has recently been piloted in a range of criminal justice services in the UK is the *Learning Disability Screening Questionnaire (LDSQ: McKenzie & Paxton, 2006)*. Here 'learning disability' refers to the term used in the UK for 'intellectual disability'. The LDSQ consists of 7 items, including literacy, employment and living situation. It was designed to

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات