

which some people are so concerned. One may state that he is loyal to the United States, for example, yet really mean that he is deeply convinced that its Government should be overthrown and that, with great loyalty to his country, he believes revolution to be the only salvation for the country. However much we might object to it, this belief would permit a person to swear to his loyalty in complete honesty. I think most everyone is aware of this problem about oaths, and it is a routine one with MMPI item responses.

In summary of all this, if one wished to persecute those who by their answers to these items seemed inconsistent with some religious or atheistic pattern of beliefs, there would be an embarrassingly large number of ordinary people in Minnesota who would be open to suspicion both ways. In reality, the responses made to these items have many variations in truth and meaning. And it would betray considerable ignorance of the practical psychology of communication if any absolute reliance were placed on responses.

As a final but most significant point relative to these items, I should point out that administration of the MMPI requires that those who are taking the test be clearly informed that they may omit any item they do not wish to answer for whatever purpose. I have never seen any studies that have drawn conclusions from the omission of particular items by a particular person. We found that items among these that are being considered were unusually frequently omitted. You may notice this in the "No answer" columns. One-third of all the respondents failed to answer the item relative to the Bible and the prophets, for example. This is a basic fact about the MMPI and such tests, and I cannot see why this freedom will not permit to each person the latitude to preserve his privacy if he is afraid. Still again I would add that, in many settings, possibly nearly every setting, where the MMPI is used in group administration, those who take it are permitted to refuse the whole test. I admit that this might seem prejudicial, and I suspect that if any one chooses to protect himself, he will do it by omitting items rather than by not taking the test at all. Is refusal to take the test any different from refusing to subject oneself to an employment or admission interview by a skilled interviewer? I think that some people who have been writing about the dangers of testing must have an almost magical belief in tests. Sometimes, when I feel so at a loss in attempting to help someone with a psychological problem, I wish that personality tests were really that subtle and powerful.

Groups of items called scales, formed into patterns called profiles, are the useful product of tests like the MMPI. I note that in your inquiry you show an awareness that the MMPI is usually scored by computers. The scales that are used for most interpretation include 10 "clinical" scales. These are the ones that carry most of the information. Several other scales indicate whether the subject understood and followed the directions. No one of these main scales has less than 30 items in it and most of them have many more than 30. The scores from the machine come back not only anonymously indicating the number of items answered in a way that counts on the scale, but the scores are usually already transformed into what we call T or standard scores. These T scores are still more remote from the particular items that make up a scale. The graphic array of T scores for the scales are finally printed into the profile.

In this connection, there is a very pretty possibility offered by the development of computer scoring. If we wish to take advantage of the presumed advantages of the use of tests, yet be assured that particular item responses shall not be considered, then we only need to be assured that those using the test do not score it, must send it straightway to the computer center, and, in the end, receive back only the profiles which are all that should be used in any case. The original test may be destroyed.

The scales of the profile were not arbitrarily set up. The MMPI is an experimentally derived instrument. It an item counts on a scale, I want to make it very clear that that item counts not because some clinician or somebody thought that the item was significant for measuring something about human personality, but it counts because in the final analysis well-diagnosed groups of maladjusted, sometimes mentally ill persons answered the item with an average frequency differing from the average frequency of the normative group that I have used for the above illustrative data. This is an exceedingly significant point and is probably least often understood by those who have not had psychometric training. No one read or composed these items to decide what it meant if one of them were answered "True" or "False." The meanings of the items came from the fact that persons with a certain kind of difficulty answered in an average way different from the "normal" standard. For example, the item "I go to church almost every week"

is counted on a scale for estimating the amount of depression. We did not just decide that going to church was related to depression. We had the response frequencies from men who complained that they were depressed. They answered "True" with a frequency of only 20 percent. You will note that the normals answered "True" with a frequency of 42 percent—22 percent more often. Now this difference also turned up for women who were depressed. We adopted a "False" response to this item as a count on the depression scale of the MMPI. We do not even now know why depressed people say they go to church less often. Note that you are not depressed if you say "False" to this one item. Actually, 55 percent of the normals answered "False." Use of the item for an MMPI scale depended on the fact that even more of the depressed persons answered "False" and so if you say "False" you have added one item more in common with depressed people than with the normals despite the fact that more than half the normals answered as you did.

Even psychologists very familiar with the MMPI cannot tell to which scale or scales an item belongs without looking it up. People often ask for a copy of a test so they can cite their objections to items they think objectionable, and they assume that the meaning of the item is obvious and that they can tell how it is interpreted. I am often asked what specified items mean. I do not know because the scoring of the scales has become so abstracted that I have no contact with items.

One more point along this line. Only 6 of the above 19 items are counted on one of the regular scales that are mostly used for personality evaluation. Four more are used on a measure that is only interpreted in estimation of the ability of the subject to follow directions and to read well enough. In fact, about 200 of the whole set of items did not end up on any one of the regularly used scales. But, of course, many of these 200 other items occur on one or another of the many experimental MMPI scales that have been published.

We cannot change or leave out any items or we lose an invaluable heritage of research in mental health. To change even a comma in an item may change its meaning. I would change the words of some items, omit some, and add new ones if I could. A new test should be devised, but its cost would be on the order of \$100,000 and we are not at this time advanced enough so that the new one would be enough better to compensate for the loss of the research and diagnostic value of the present MMPI even in view of its manifest weaknesses.

The subject of professional training brings me to my next line of response. It is appropriate that the public should be aware of the uses of such tests as the MMPI, but I have repeatedly pointed out that it is far more important that the public should be aware of the persons who are using the test and of the uses to which it is put. In this context, the distributor of the MMPI, the Psychological Corp. of New York City, accepts and practices the ethical principles for test distributors that have been promulgated by the American Psychological Association. These rules prohibit the sale of tests to untrained or incompetent persons. Use or possession of the MMPI by others is prohibited but, since this carries no present penalty, the distributor is helpless except for his control of the supply. Tests, as I have said above, are not like switchblade knives, designed to be used against people; they offer potential contributions to happiness. And I cannot believe that a properly accredited clinical psychologist or psychiatrist or physician who may use the MMPI would under any circumstances use it to the disadvantage of the persons being tested. If he does so, he is subject to the intraprofessional ethical-practice controls that are explicit and carry sanctions against those of us who transgress. The MMPI provides data which, like certain medical data, are considered by many to be helpful in guidance and analysis and understanding of people. Of course, in the making of this point, I am aware that their is no absolute meaning to what is ethical. What one group may think should be done about a certain medical examination disclosure may be considered by another group to be against the patient's interest. I cannot do more than extend this ubiquitous ethical dilemma to the use of the personality test.

The essential point is that such tests should not be used except in professional circles by professional people and that the data it provides should be held confidential and be protected within the lawful practice of ethics. When these requirements are not met, there is reason for complaint. I hope I have made it clear that it is also my conviction that the MMPI will hurt no one, adult or child, in the taking of it. Without defending all uses of it, I surely defend it, and instruments like it, when they are in proper hands and for proper purposes. Monachesi and I have tested 15,000 ninth-grade school children with the MMPI. This took us into public schools all over the State, even into some parochial schools. In all of this testing, we had no difficulties with children, parents, or teachers except for a few courteous inquiries. We are now publishing what we hope will

be significant data from this work, data bearing on delinquency and school dropout. We believe that this work demonstrates that properly administered, properly explained, and properly protected tests are acceptable to the public.

At the beginning of this statement I warned that I was going to make it quite long because I felt deeply on the matter. I hope I have not sounded as though I were merely being defensive, protecting us from those who would burn tests and who for good reasons are exceedingly sensitive about psychological testing. I am apologetic if I have sounded too much like the professional scientist and have seemed to talk down to the issue or to be too minutely explicit. I have not meant to insult by being unduly simple, but I have felt that I had to expand adequately on the points. As for psychologists who are those most widely applying such tests, I am aware that the public will look with increasing seriousness upon those who are entrusted with problems of mental health and the assessment of human actions.

I will end with a repetition of my feeling that, while it is desirable for the public to require ethical practices of those using tests, the public may be reassured that the psychologists, physicians, and others who use these new tests will be even more alert to apply the intraprofessional controls that are a requisite to professional responsibility. But I must emphasize that it is not to public advantage to so limit these professional judgments that we fail to progress in mental-health research and applications from lack of freedom to use the best instruments we have and to develop better ones.

REFERENCE

Dahlstrom, W. G., & Welsh, G. S. *An MMPI handbook: A guide to use in clinical practice and research*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1960.

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WHY HOUSE HEARINGS ON INVASION OF PRIVACY

(By Representative Cornelius E. Gallagher, Democrat of New Jersey,
Chairman, special inquiry, House Government Operations Committee)

Representative Cornelius E. Gallagher, Democrat of New Jersey, holds an LL.B. cum laude, from John Marshall College of Law, and did his postgraduate work at New York University. Governmental invasion of privacy has been a special interest of his for many years. Representative Gallagher proposed the study which resulted in Congressional investigation of polygraphs 2 years ago (House Government Operations Committee Report 198, *Use of Polygraphs as "Lie Detectors"* by the Federal Government, based on 1964 hearings of Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee—chairman, John E. Moss, Democrat of California).

Gallagher was the floor manager for the original passage of the law which created the Peace Corps, a bill originated by Representative Henry S. Reuss, Democrat of Wisconsin. Thus both Representative Reuss and Representative Gallagher have some familiarity with the Peace Corps and its selection procedures. Reuss was asked to serve on the Special Inquiry Subcommittee investigating invasion of privacy, and sharp questions from him will be found in the section of this *American Psychologist* which deals with House testimony.

The American people would rise in great protest if the Government of the United States conducted a physical search of the homes of public employees as a condition of employment. I am sure they also would protest if the persons, or mail, or other personal effects of Federal workers were searched without a proper warrant issued by a judge. I do not think anyone would argue that we might find a lot of undesirables working for the Government if such steps were taken. Yet the Federal Government has been engaged in a much more insidious type of search than going through someone's home, mail, or personal papers. It has been searching the minds of Federal employees and job applicants through personality testing. The objective has been a laudable one—to protect the Federal service from misfits—but the means, in my view, violates the 4th amendment to the Constitution and perhaps the 1st, 5th, 9th, and 14th amendments as well, depending on the facts in each case. Federal employees and job applicants have been compelled to take these tests under Government direction, or lose positions, promotions, assignments, not only then but also in the future. There is little or

no effective appeal procedure for our citizens who wish to challenge personality testing as an invasion of privacy, or contest interpretations of the findings in the event they do take the tests.

Remember there was nothing voluntary about these tests when the Special Inquiry of the House Government Operations Committee started its investigation. Persons could not select their own private psychologists and doctors to conduct and evaluate the tests. Government employees and job applicants are far from the cooperative subjects that even the test publishers admit are necessary to make the test results of any real value. They often resent the questions and admit quite freely that their answers were those they thought would get them the job or promotion. They even recognized the purpose of many of the questions on the so-called lie scale. Those who were obvious misfits probably would have been picked up through interviews and suitability checking anyway. Those who gave scrupulously honest answers opened themselves up to all sorts of things. The eccentrics, for example, who often can bring great creativity and drive to their work, were eliminated, I fear, because they raised doubts in the minds of personnel officers. Frankly, it disturbs me when we strive so hard to select persons within set patterns and exclude those who do not fall into those patterns, especially when the reliability and validity of the patterns are an unsettled controversy in themselves.

It used to be that whenever a person took an action, he knew that others might observe it and reach their own conclusions. But when he is forced to reveal his thoughts against his will, he has surrendered his conscience in a very real sense. At that point, man is being judged not by his actions or record, but by his thoughts as interpreted by someone else using fallible instruments of measurement.

It is true that many of the questions contained on personality questionnaires are innocuous. But it is equally true that many of them are not. Numerous questions inquire not only into very intimate sex matters, but family situations, religious views, childhood happenings, and other matters normally the business of no one other than the individual concerned and those persons with whom he may decide to share a confidence. In a free society, it is the individual who should make that decision, not the Government.

I am not saying these tests are without merit. I am sure that in some cases the tests are a useful tool in psychiatric evaluation when they are used in a clinical situation where there is a doctor-patient relationship. This is where they should be used—strictly in a medical determination. What bothers me is that personnel people often are interpreting these tests, and the answers are reposing in some Government file somewhere, all set to follow the person throughout his career or noncareer.

I am often told that personality testers are not interested in the answers to individual questions. This may be true too. But the fact remains that the person taking the test must give a written answer to a specific question. What happens if that answer is ever used for another purpose? Would it in any way harm of incriminate the person? I believe any reasonable man would have to accept my contention that the answers to many of the questions could be used in an adverse manner. So-called confidential files do not solve this problem. Our investigations show that the confidentiality of Government files is a myth. Such files sometimes float from agency to agency. Federal investigators in some instances are given access to information far removed from the subject of their inquiry. Folders sit open for inspection on desks and in the "In" and "Out" baskets of Government agency offices. Outright "leaks" of information occasionally come to light. If a person has been improperly evaluated, the notations in such files haunt him for the rest of his life. On some forms, he must state whether he has ever taken a psychological test. Why? The answer is obvious. One must also understand that whenever doubts are raised in relation to a Federal employee or job applicant, they are resolved in most cases against the employee or applicant. Unfortunately, that is the nature of the thing. Some would say it is only human. So the Government must exercise extraordinary caution when it does anything to raise such doubts.

I often hear the argument that national security and the good of the public service demand the use of such practices as personality testing and polygraph examinations. But when I ask the top officials of Government agencies, their assistants, and the assistants to the assistants, whether they were ever required to take such tests, the answer is always, "No." These are the people who make the great decisions which chart the course of the Nation, and, in some cases, the world. These are the people who have access to the most hush-hush secrets.

They do not take the tests. It is their minor officials, secretaries, clerks, and janitors who take the tests. There is an assumption that the top level of Federal bureaucracy is made up of stable and competent people based on their past records, and this judgment stands until it is proven otherwise by their actions. I would suggest that we make the same assumption about the dedicated men and women who make up the rank and file of our public service. Sure, a few psychological misfits may slip through, just as they do in the top echelons. But at least the Federal Government will have guarded a sacred right guaranteed to public employees, as well as to all Americans—the right to be let alone.



7



