Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory Encyclopedia Article

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory

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Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory

Gathers information on personality, attitudes, and mental health.

The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory is a test used to gather information on personality, attitudes, and mental health of persons aged 16 or older and to aid in clinical diagnosis. It consists of 556 true-false questions, with different formats available for individual and group use. The MMPI is untimed and can take anywhere from 45 minutes to 2 hours to complete. This is normally done in a single session, but can be extended to a second session if necessary. Specific conditions or syndromes that the test can help identify include hypochondriasis, **depression,** hysteria, paranoia, and **schizophrenia.** Raw scores based on deviations from standard responses are entered on personality profile forms to obtain the individual results. There is also a validity scale to thwart attempts to "fake" the test. Because the MMPI is a complex test whose results can sometimes be ambiguous (and/or skewed by various factors), professionals tend to be cautious in interpreting it, often preferring broad descriptions to specific psychiatric diagnoses, unless these are supported by further testing and observable behavior. A sixth-grade reading level is required in order to take the test. However, a tape-recorded version is available for those with limited literacy, visual impairments, or other problems.

For Further Study

Books

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Walsh, W. Bruce, and Nancy E. Betz. *Tests and Assessment.* 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.

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