

## **Announcing the Development of the MMPI-3**

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The University of Minnesota Press is currently working with authors and advisors on the development of the MMPI-3, which will be the next generation of the MMPI instrument suite. This continues the commitment to an active research/development program begun in 1982 when the Press resumed publication of the MMPI which it had licensed to the Psychological Corporation since the mid-1950s. At that time, we identified as a major goal of our publishing program active support of research and development (r/d) on the MMPI. NCS, now Pearson Assessments, was licensed as exclusive distributor, with responsibility for marketing, materials production, and scoring/interpretive services.

The first major developmental efforts produced the MMPI-2, a revision of the original MMPI for use with adults, and the MMPI-A, the first version of the test developed for adolescents. The MMPI, published in 1943, had never been revised, but by the 1970s, there were calls for revision, among the most telling from Starke Hathaway, one of the authors of the original MMPI:

*“If another twelve years were to go by without our having gone on to a better instrument or better procedure for the practical needs, I fear that the MMPI, like some other tests, might have changed from a hopeful innovation to an aged obstacle.” (1972a, p. xiv)*

*“Even if it has little more to offer us in research, I fear that the aged MMPI will be tolerated for some time by those concerned with practical problems in psychological evaluation.” (1972b, p.23)*

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The MMPI-2 was published in 1989, having been developed by a Restandardization Committee composed of James Butcher, Grant Dahlstrom, John Graham, and Auke Tellegen. The committee set as its goals improving the test while maintaining as much continuity as possible with the original MMPI. As the name of the committee indicates, the major aim was developing new test norms to replace the “Minnesota Normals” collected in the 1930s. Minor changes were made in the test items to delete outdated content and content deemed offensive, but the number of items remained almost identical (566/567). Major psychometric innovations were introduced with the Uniform T scores, developed to correct the percentile non-comparability of the linear T scores, and the Inconsistency Scales, validity indicators measuring the tendency of test-takers to respond to items in an inconsistent or contradictory manner. A new set of Content Scales captured new item content. However, the original Validity and Clinical Scales were retained largely intact. A major textbook, *Essentials of MMPI-2 and MMPI-A Interpretation*, authored by James Butcher and Carolyn Williams, was published by the Press in 1992 and revised in 2000.

Major projects initiated during the 1990s included ongoing updates of the Minnesota Reports by author James Butcher, validation studies of the MMPI-2 and MMPI-A by John Graham and Yossef Ben-Porath, and research by Auke Tellegen leading to the development of the Restructured Clinical (RC) Scales, the first-ever revision of the original Clinical Scales designed to deal with the long-recognized challenges of the scales -- excessive scale intercorrelations and heterogeneous, over-inclusive item content. Continuing development of the MMPI-2, the RC Scales were added to the test in 2003, documented by a monograph, *The MMPI-2 Restructured Clinical (RC) Scales: Development, Validation, and Interpretation* by Tellegen and colleagues, published by the Press.

Building on the wealth of research generated by the release of the MMPI-2, the Press sponsored further research and development work by Ben-Porath and Tellegen, which produced the current psychometrically up-to-date version of the instrument, the MMPI-2 Restructured Form (MMPI-2-RF), published in 2008. The test is composed of 338 items, drawn from the 500+ items of the MMPI and the MMPI-2, with the Restructured Clinical (RC) Scales at its core. The substantive scales, including 23 Specific Problems Scales, link the MMPI-2-RF to current conceptualizations of personality and psychopathology. The Technical Manual provides a brief conceptual and methodological introduction to the test, and detailed, extensive data supporting the validity and reliability of the test in numerous settings. Standard, comprehensive interpretive guidelines ensure cross-interpreter consistency, and the first annotated interpretive report for any MMPI instrument documents for the user the source of interpretive statements as test-taker response, empirical correlate, or construct-based inference. The MMPI-2 norms and test items were retained in the MMPI-2-RF. A Press-published book by co-author Ben-Porath, *Interpreting the MMPI-2-RF*, provides a comprehensive review of the evolution of the MMPI instruments, and a list of MMPI-2-RF references is available on the Press web site:

<https://www.upress.umn.edu/test-division/MMPI-2-RF/mmpi-2-rf-references>.

Subsequent Press-sponsored work by co-authors Ben-Porath and Tellegen explored ways to further develop and improve the MMPI-2-RF. This research identified certain content areas not covered optimally by the existing item pool and the need to collect new norms (the MMPI-2/MMPI-2-RF norms are 30 years old) as the primary development goals for ensuring that the MMPI remains up-to-date in terms of content and psychometrically.

Based on these r/d advances of the past two decades, the University of Minnesota Press is currently sponsoring development of the MMPI-3 under the auspices of the Press's Research and Product Development program, which is overseen by the University's Office of the Vice President for Research and an external Advisory Board. The Board, composed of five members who are researchers and/or clinical practitioners credentialed in personality assessment and knowledgeable in the application and interpretation of personality instruments, including the MMPI tests, is responsible for working with the Test Division in setting research/development priorities; advising on the preparation and dissemination of requests for r/d proposals; reviewing r/d proposals submitted annually for Press funding; and reviewing all proposed

publications of the Test Division. In addition, the Test Division has set up a consultative panel composed of psychologists expert in the use of the MMPI in research and practice to advise the Press and the test authors on major points in the development of the MMPI-3. The areas represented by the 10 panel members are: general psychopathology, disability, forensic, medical, neuropsychology, and public safety.

MMPI-3 development is being led by MMPI-2-RF co-authors Ben-Porath and Tellegen. In addition to Advisory Board oversight, Ben-Porath and Tellegen provide annual updates on this work at the MMPI research symposium. At the appropriate time, a formal public announcement of publication will be made, accompanied by related scientific and training presentations.

### References

- Ben-Porath, Y. S. (2012). *Interpreting the MMPI-2-RF*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
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