

PhDr. Pavel Harsa, PhD.

Laboratory of Psychology,  
Department of Psychiatry, First  
Faculty of Medicine, Charles  
University and General  
University Hospital in Prague



# MEDICAL PSYCHOLOGY: CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

# General Psychology

- Investigates mental phenomena, describes, analyses and explores their causal and logical connections and attempts to explain them
- Proposes psychological principles and laws
- Provides a theoretical basis for prediction and management of human behavior



# Practical (Applied) Psychology

- Applies psychological knowledge to other fields and various domains of human action, (for practical purposes)
- Many different fields
  - Social psychology
  - Psychology of sport
  - Psychology of transportation
  - Human resources
  - etc.



# Clinical Psychology

---

- Application of general psychological knowledge in medicine
- Mostly used in psychiatry
- Assessment
- Psychotherapy
- Counseling
- Rehabilitation
- Research and teaching
- Forensic psychological consultations



# Psychological Assessment

- Complex assessment of personality functioning
- Basic characteristics and behavior
- Not only pathology, investigates also other, intact aspects of personality functioning
- Attempts to quantify basic personality traits



# Assessment Goals

- Determined by the demand of the referring medical practitioner
  - ▣ Personality features
  - ▣ Premorbid functioning of cognitive abilities
  - ▣ Psychopathology (qualitative and quantitative assessment)
  - ▣ Causes (innate vs. acquired, functional vs. organic, etc.)
  - ▣ Prognosis (permanent vs. reversible problems)

# Assessment Process

---

- 1/ Assessment session – exploration, interview, test administration
- 2/ Interpretation of findings
  - ▣ Personality features and behavior
  - ▣ Pathology (thinking, intellect, memory, attention, regulation etc.)

# Psychological Diagnostics

- Practical and theoretical basis for diagnosis in psychology
- A separate psychological discipline, based on:
  - General and personality psychology (general principles of psychological functioning)
  - Differential psychology (individual differences, individuality)
  - Psychopathology (abnormal psychology)
- Attempts to measure and quantify mental phenomena (mathematical and statistical methods)





# Methods of Psychological Assessment

- A/ Clinical methods – not bound by strict rules of administration and interpretation
- B/ Psychological tests – standardized testing (often computerized)
  
- A/ Clinical methods
  - ▣ Observation
  - ▣ Interview
  - ▣ Benefits: natural, flexible, adaptable to specific problem and situation



# Clinical Methods: observation

- Observation – general method for gaining knowledge
- In psychology the subjective mental processes are available only to the subject himself, through **introspection**. Otherwise we can make inferences about these phenomena only indirectly, through observation of another's manifestations of mental phenomena – **extraspection**
- Focus on all features of the person observed: clothes, demeanor, facial expressions, gestures, communication (verba and nonverbal), metacommunication
- Rating scales – for precise delineation of the observed processes and behavior description



# Clinical Methods: interview

- ❑ The most important and difficult method for gaining information and diagnostically salient data
- ❑ Creating and maintaining good contact (rapport), motivation to cooperate, is crucial throughout the whole assessment process.
- ❑ More or less structured (questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, etc.)
- ❑ Exploration – detailed diagnostic interview.
- ❑ History (anamnesis) – detailed exploration of the past of the patient
- ❑ Correction and gaining objective data



# Test Methods

---

- Special instruments for psychological assessment
- Standardized methods (precise methodology, conditions for administration, test materials and interpretation is the same for all the examinees)
- Interpretation – based on statistical norms
- Objectivity – independence of the results
- Reliability (how reliably the test measures)
- Validity (how valid are the inferences based on the method)
- Not all the tests used in Czech republic are based on statistically validated parameters



# General Typology of Testing Methods

- Performance methods
- Projective methods
- Questionnaires

# Performance Methods

- Test of special abilities – an important area of personality (general and special abilities)
- Impossible to measure them directly
- The level of performance in various aspects of functioning (perception, thinking, motor)
- Performance – the outcome of a directed action aimed at solving a task
- The most objective and reliable of the test methods

# Intelligence

- A unitary ability vs. a complex of abilities
- Intelligence – intellect; ability of orientation in new situations, problem-solving, work with general and abstract concepts according to the rules of logic and on the basis of truthful judgments to generate new knowledge
- Fluid / crystalline; innate talent / intelligence based on education and experience, as it is expressed in thinking and logical judgments



# Intelligence Tests

- The most widely used performance methods
- Complex tests – eg. Wechsler scales (WAIS-R, WAIS III, PDW, WISC)
- Intelligence structure, function of individual aspects, partial performance, original (premorbid) mental capacity, defect and deterioration assessment.
- Uni-dimensional – Raven's test
- Developmental IQ – ratio of mental age / real age
- Deviation IQ – deviation from a mean performance of other persons of the same age



# Special Abilities Tests

---

- Memory
- Attention
- Verbal and numerical abilities
- Spatial imagination
- Psychomotoric tempo
- Artistic and other types of abilities



# Neuropsychological Tests

- ❑ Neuropsychology – studies relationships between the brain and behavior, brain structure and its functions
- ❑ Clinical neuropsychology – applied discipline, borderline field of study
- ❑ Neuropsychological tests – original instruments for measuring cognitive functions and their impairments; often aim at measuring organic brain damage and localising brain lesions
- ❑ Often only parts of larger tests are used



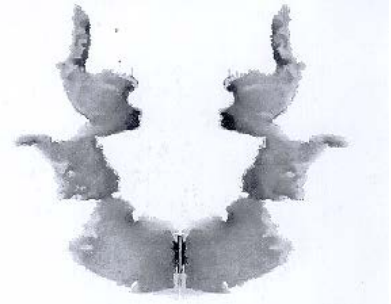
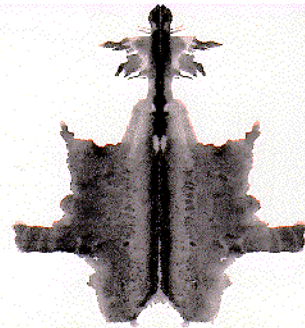
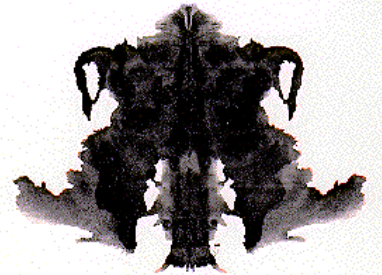
# Projective Tests

---

- Personality tests, stressing dynamic aspect of personality, motivational and emotional features. Principle of projection – inner sets of every person influence his apperception, projects itself into his reactions and leaves specific marks in his products
- Confrontation with a stimulus situation (usually an ambiguous, little-structured stimulus material)
- Verbal, graphic, creative stimuli
- Benefits – minimal possibility to intentionally distort one's performance on the part of the examinee

# Typology of Projective Tests

- Verbal; Word Association Test – one of the oldest diagnostic methods (C.G.Jung, from 1911, standard set of 100 words, various modifications; word production dynamics, emotional markers, quality of thinking
- Graphic projective methods, projective techniques
- Rorschach inkblot method, widely used around the world, highly differentiated and useful







7




9



8



10



# H.Rorschach, 1921 (ROR, RIM - Rorschach Inkblot Method)

- Leonardo da Vinci – inspiration from ambiguous blots
- Based on relationship between personality features and interpretation of visual stimuli
- Subjects create responses based on interpretation of the blots, revealing individual characteristics of the examinees, including their pathology
- Potentially able to cover wide scope of personality functioning
- We study apperception styles, determinants, contents, originality of responses, thinking quality etc.





# Questionnaires

---

- Sets of questions or other statements – feelings, attitudes, interests, behaviors in various situations, etc.
- Positives – easy and fast administration and interpretation, much data from many people in little time
- Negatives – prone to intentional and unintentional misrepresentation of examinees' experience, some measure also subjects' tendencies to lie
- Unidimensional – MAS
- Multidimensional – EOD, MMPI



# New Trends

---

- ❑ Old methods are continually being revised and enriched, based on new findings
- ❑ Computerization of older methods, new computer-based methods, eg. MMPI, intelligence tests
- ❑ New methods based on innovations in general, personality psychology and psychopathology
- ❑ Scales

# Psychological Tests

- Individually – assessments of specific traits or states
- Test batteries according to the nature of the problem. Results – strict interpretation is quantitative, qualitative analysis of specific responses can be incorporated into interpretation
- Synthesis of knowledge, experience, standardized application of various methods and clinical insight



# Psychological Report

- Written, easy-to-understand formulations
- Integration of all the findings about the examinee
- Description of the assessments process, clinical, and test methods, their results, including quantitative measures; avoid nonspecific qualitative expressions that do not permit comparison, assessment of the degree of impairment, developmental trends and prognosis
- Summarizes of all the important data and discussion of them in relationship to the goals of individual assessment. (eg. level of deterioration in dementia)
- Final summary –clearly and unequivocally (if possible) expresses the information attained



# Literature

---

**Čermák, I., Ženatý, J.:** *Rorschach a projektivní metody*. Ročenka ČSRaP, 2005, 1, 5-230 s.

**Preiss, M.:** *Neuropsychologie v neurologii*. Grada. Praha

**Stančák, A.:** *Klinická psychodiagnostika*, Nové Zámky 1996.

**Svoboda, M.:** *Psychologická diagnostika dospělých*. Portál. Praha 1999.