

The Detection of Malingering Using IRT Person-fit

Methods

Rob Meijer

Email: meijer@edte.utwente.nl

Anna Villa T. Dagohoy (Presenter)

Email: a.v.dagohoy@edte.utwente.nl

GW/MD, University of Twente

PO Box 217

7500 AE Enschede

The Netherlands

Abstract

The detection of malingering in neuropsychological assessment has become increasingly important in recent years with the growth of forensic evaluations because litigants in civil or criminal cases may sometimes be motivated to exaggerate symptoms of psychopathology. Malingering is the intentional production of negative physical or psychological symptoms with the presence of external incentives such as avoidance of work or military duty, evading criminal prosecution, or the attainment of financial compensation (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Malingerers rarely identify themselves and foolproof methods of detecting malingering remain to be found. Much of the literature in malingering reflected attempts to identify and improve malingering detection strategies using standard malingering indexes. In this study item response theory (IRT) person-fit techniques (Levine & Rubin, 1979) will be used to detect malingerers. Person-fit quantifies the difference between a respondents observed pattern of item responses to responses expected on the basis of that person's standing on the latent trait θ and a set of item response functions (IRFs), as specified by some IRT model. In this study we will illustrate the usefulness of person-fit methods that are suited to detect malingering across different subtests.

Key words: Neuropsychology, Malingering, Psychopathology, IRT, Person-fit

References

- Wood, J.M., et.al. (2002). Clinical Assessment. *Annual Review Psychology*, 53, 519-543.
- Holmquist, L.A. & Wanlass, R.L. (2002). A Multidimensional Approach towards Malingering Detection. *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology*, 17, 143-156.
- Essig, S.M., et.al. (2001). Practices in Forensic Neuropsychology: Perspectives of Neuropsychologists and Trial Attorneys. *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology*, 16, 271-291.
- Sullivan, K., et al. (2002). Malingering on the RAVLT Part II. Deterrence Strategies. *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology*, 17, 223-233.
- Sullivan, K. & Richer, C. (2002). Malingering on Subjective Complaint Tasks An Exploration of the Deterrent Effects of Warning. *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology*, 17, 691-708.
- Dunn, T.M., et.al. (2003). Detecting Neuropsychological Malingering: Effects of Coaching and Information. *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology*, 18, 121-134.
- Inman, T.H. & Berry, D.T.R. (2002). Cross-validation of Indicators of Malingering A Comparison of Nine Neuropsychological tests, Four tests of Malingering, and Behavioral Observations. *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology*, 17, 1-23.