

Clinical Neuropsychology and Psychological Assessment

Dr. James Moses

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Research Database: Members of this research group base their empirical studies within the group on analysis of data from a very large archival data set that Dr. Moses and his students have developed during 30 years of clinical practice at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. There are data from several thousand archival clinical cases available for study. Almost all of the data have been entered into a computerized database. These data are available for immediate study to members of this research group. Students typically develop a topic of personal interest in their first year in this group and are encouraged to continue with that analysis or investigation of a related topic as the basis of their dissertation study.

A typical case in the database will have complete intelligence, memorial, visual perceptual, language, neuropsychological, and personality test data, although not all cases have complete data for all of these categories. In every case there is extensive demographic and diagnostic data that can be used to categorize clinical and demographic variables for analysis.

A wide variety of psychometric measures are available within the database, and almost all of these psychometric measures are represented by at least several hundred cases. There are sufficient data for multivariate analysis of most psychometric measures of interest, separately and in combination with other measures. Major neuropsychological “battery” approaches are represented; large data sets based on the Halstead-Reitan, Luria-Nebraska, and Benton-Iowa groups of tests are available for analysis.

About 25% of the cases have exclusive or primary psychiatric disorder. About 25% of the cases have primarily medical, usually neurological, disorder. About half of the cases have mixed neurological and psychiatric disorder. The group is widely varied in age and educational level, but most subjects are Caucasian males. All subjects who were referred for clinical evaluation and who completed criterion measures were included in the database.

Research Topics: Research topics are developed on the basis of the interest of the student, and may involve any question that can be addressed with the data that are available. We have investigated topics related to complex syndrome analysis, construct and concurrent validation of psychometric measures, differential diagnosis, development of abbreviated forms of test methods, and mathematical modeling of relationships among domains of personality and neuropsychological variables.

Students in this group are encouraged to identify a topic of personal interest so that their research study has direct relevance to their learning objectives. We then review the literature to identify specific cognitive and personality variables that may be relevant to analysis of that diagnostic issue, and we formulate hypotheses that are empirically testable. We make use of data from the archival database to test those hypotheses, and if our analyses are successful we encourage students to submit their findings for presentation at a professional meeting or publication in a professional journal. Students in this group are encouraged to study an initial research topic that they can develop into their dissertation research study.

Some of our recent and ongoing studies have involved the following topics:

Specific cognitive deficit associated with depression

Specific cognitive deficit associated chronic schizophrenia

Similarities and differences of cognitive deficit in schizophrenia and brain injury

Patterns of cognitive deficit in dementia vs. mild cognitive impairment

Specific patterns of verbal and nonverbal memorial deficit in schizophrenia

Construct validation of logical and rote verbal learning and verbal memory strategies

Verbal learning and memory patterns in Dementia vs. Cognitive Disorder NOS

Construct validation of the Benton Facial Recognition Test

Construct validation of the Asian Facial Recognition Test

Comparison and differentiation of Caucasian and Asian facial recognition ability

Relationships of depression, anxiety, and other emotional variables to cognition

Openings: 1 to 4 new members may join a new section of the group each academic year. Students who have an identified professional interest in neuropsychological assessment are primarily encouraged to apply.

Apply: Interested students are asked to submit the following items to Dr. Moses by Monday April 2, 2012.

1. Curriculum Vitae

2. One or two page memo discussing past research experience, how and why the student became interested in neuropsychology, and a description of specific research and clinical interests in neuropsychology

Notification: Students who are accepted into the Clinical Neuropsychology and Psychological Assessment research group will be notified by telephone at 10am on Monday, April 23, 2012.