

To: "Neuropsychology" <npsych@npsych.com>
Subject: [npsych] Re: Assessment after head injury

I find the Rorschach inkblot procedure to be useful in assessing the following areas after head injury:

Cognitive performance (compared to estimated pre-injury baseline performance, productivity, perceptual accuracy, capacity to organize, lack of idiosyncratic suggesting inability to perform error monitoring), availability of long-term memory (retrieval of some images from personal history as opposed to vague and commonplace perceptions lacking imagination and retrieval of personal experience).

Stress-related imagery: Fear and vulnerability to attack, self-image as damaged, perception of the world as depleted or dangerous, self-image as unattractive, etc.

Mood and impulse control: Contrast between intense dysphoria and bland exterior leads one to consider the cerebral personality symptom of aprosodia, evidence for impulsivity and poor judgment, or lack of drive and motivation suggests various frontal lobe patterns, etc.

The request for a test that was well standardized: There is too much variability in patient performance to permit close standardization, but there are good tables of form accuracy provided by Exner and others for children and adults.

With the Rorschach, there is a balance between excellent opportunity to measure individualized, idiosyncratic performance (as opposed to particular scales, which have their own value), and a high level of training, and experience needed for administration, scoring, interpreting, and integration with other findings (interview; history other test procedures, records, etc.).

Rolland Parker.