Proponent of Internet tests contends they eliminate bias

40,300,000 ways a candidate self-presents.
People naturally try to present themselves in the best light when applying for a job or trying to collect in a lawsuit. Just like IBM’s Watson always beats the world chess champion, no human using conventional ways (interview-judgment, background credit check, unstructured physical-psychiatric exam report and paper and pencil tests) can match the computer algorithm Internet tests of the MMPI and Standard Predictor.

In my testimony before the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Justice Department in Chicago in August, 2016, I stated that one must screen for deception, mental illness and substance abuse with a proven instrument like the MMPI in Internet testing and a report generating system. I also said that using the Standard Predictor of Violence Potential, a measure of abuse or violence, is needed. There have been eight decades of research on measuring “dangerousness” or “repeat offending” and “abuse or violence potential.”

For years now all the media is talking about is police violence, the greatest concern of not only the public and the media but also leadership. Only an Internet report using tests that forensic and industrial psychologists would employ is scientifically justifiable.

If clinical psychologists are going to work in the area of industrial and organizational psychology, perhaps they should obtain the training necessary and read the literature carefully and thoroughly.

In my testimony I said, “One cannot train out deception, mental illness, substance abuse and violence. Diversification of the police departments is also needed. Finally, training and retraining, as New York City has demonstrated for decades, can lower violence in the community.”

Until clinicians start employing actuarial assessment in every at-risk person that appears before clinics, hospitals, courts, jails or human resource intake, there will continue to be a 61 percent mistrial rate. This current way is considerably less than chance. Perhaps financial decision makers should just flip a coin rather than employ the conventional ways. Then we would have a better hit rate. And perhaps there would be a drop in the 11,000 homicides, 17,000 suicides and 200,000 murders, the 153 police deaths, 150 police suicides and the 871 police involved homicides we have every year.

References available from author

Robert John Zagar, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist with a private practice in Chicago, Ill. He has been a professor or assistant professor at several professional schools of psychology and is a staunch advocate of Internet testing as a means of eliminating bias in psychological evaluations. His email address is: doctorzagar@gmail.com.

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