

In a situation such as ours, where mental diagnoses form the basis for practical social adjustments, there is a constant need for critical evaluation of tests as they really throw light on the most significant points of mental status and capabilities. We ourselves for long have been considering test results in the light of detailed case-histories, in the light of what we could learn of developmental conditions, previous education, environment, etc., up to the time of first testing; and later by comparison with further testing and the social outcome.

We feel strongly that, above all things, we need to know, as far as possible, how the findings on tests correlate with results in life. When this is done we find that conclusions often drawn from scheduled averages and norms do not hold true for individual cases, yet it is always just a single individual whose case is presented for diagnosis by the clinical psychologist.

(1) Of the present situation we think as follows: We cannot be satisfied with Binet-Simon measurement alone, even for rough diagnosis, except in cases of low grade feeble-mindedness. Many criticisms already made of these tests seem to us to be valid—reiteration of them is not needed—but we may offer a few general points of opinion:

(a) We do not feel satisfied with the separate tests themselves, even for rough diagnostic purposes. We feel that some of them might be replaced by better tests.

(b) We feel certain that, at least for our population, some of these tests are not rightly placed at age-levels.

(c) We feel that at several places these tests depend too much upon language and matters of information are unduly stressed.

(d) We have seen no particular reason for adopting any one of the revisions. None of these seems to show enough advantages over the 1911 series, nor obviate the difficulties inherent in the original. Indeed, some of the objections show even more strongly in the revisions.

Concerning age-level testing in general: We do feel that for certain cases rough interpretation by age-levels is highly valuable, although we are not prepared to say that a percentage grading might not be more justifiable. Of course, we regard as ridiculous the diagnosis of adults in terms of retardation from their chronological age, and we certainly find very definite reasons for disagreeing with the idea that the capabilities of older persons can be evaluated in terms of age-levels of "intelligence." The notion that capacity for giving testimony, or industrial efficiency, or ability in any special field can be

estimated by an ordinary age diagnosis, we find to be erroneous. Many elements of character and of capacity gained by world-experience are not so easily determined.

One important phase of the whole situation seems to us to be that some psychologists think of the possibilities of achievement and conduct in astonishingly and unwarrantably simple terms.

While we somewhat deplore the present lack of close co-operation between clinical psychologists, yet we see certain advantages at this stage through many working according to different methods and using different tests. None of us, as yet, knows sufficient for practical purposes.

(2) Our present procedure: We passed from the 1905 to the 1908 and then to the 1911 Binet series as they appeared. We adopted the latter in order to send to our State School diagnoses on the feeble-minded comparable to those made there. In order to keep our records equivalent we are still continuing the 1911 scale. We do not use the point scale because of practical time considerations.

In young individuals and among the lower feeble-minded we grade by Binet, plus school work and a few other simple tests. In all other instances we feel the urgent necessity of using a wide range of tests for special abilities, which, we find, begin to vary so greatly at 10 years or so of age. These often have much more significance for social implications than any age-level test. In special cases, such as those presented by the psychoses and neuroses, by defects in self-control, by educational and vocational problems, we vary and often greatly extend our procedure. We then use tests not only from our own series, but from many other available sources. We sometimes outline a detailed psychogram, which contains items of diagnosis and prognosis based on test results and other vitally important findings.

In our situation there is, unfortunately, perhaps, much more chance for a practically critical outlook on the interpretation of tests than for developing norms. Much of the standardizing of our own tests has been done outside of our laboratory. Through constant development of case-studies and follow-up work, we have, and shall continue to have, we hope, much practical and carefully worked-up material for future publication.

(3) Lines for future development of testing: We are convinced that there is need for much further experimentation, both with measuring scales and separate tests. We see many educational and vocational problems which are unanswerable as yet. With the idea often

expressed that there is little need for other tests, the need being only for further standardization, we certainly do not agree.

We believe that there should be steady development of a more critical attitude towards method, taking into account all the various adventitious conditions which may interfere with the examinee achieving the best results.

We also feel that there is much room for development of better interpretations, particularly in the light of years of follow-up work of special cases. Bearing on this is the vital question of how individuals who maintain themselves well in different grades of society react to tests. This problem of norms for social levels is hardly touched and, we fancy, will bring some valuable information when worked at.

(4) If there is to be as rapid advance as possible in the future, there must be much better co-operation between psychologists. It is a crude stage in the development of any science when workers are pulling in different directions and little cognizance is taken of methods and norms established by others. We would heartily favor special conferences on tests and testing.

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(To be continued in the May number)