The Concurrent Validity of Three Self-Report Measures of Borderline Personality

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The recent accumulation of self-report measures of borderline personality disorder (BPD) affords the opportunity to evaluate both the construct validity of the concept and the quality of these measures. This study examines the relationship among three recently developed self-report instruments for assessing BPD from the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI; Morey, 1991), the MMPI Personality Disorders Scales (MPD; Morey, Waugh, & Blashfield, 1985), and the Bell Object Relations Inventory (BORI: Bell, Billington, & Becker, 1986). Data on the three measures were provided by 119 undergraduate subjects from a southeastern university. A correlational analysis addresses the convergence of these measures of BPD, their divergence from measures of different but related traits, and their independence from variance due to method. Application of the Campbell-Fiske (1959) criteria indicates adequate convergence for all the BPD measures but a lack of discriminant validity for the BORI scales. The fit of the data to a structural model of construct validity is tested using confirmatory factor analysis, and these results are consistent with the hypothesis of a latent borderline trait factor independent of measurement method factors. In sum, the construct validity of the borderline personality concept using self-report methodologies receives support, and a strong association between borderline personality and paranoid phenomena is also suggested.

KEY WORDS: borderline personality, construct validity; assessment.
INTRODUCTION

In recent years, self-report methods of assessing borderline personality disorder (BPD) have received increased amounts of attention. Some studies have focused on the utility of standard instruments, such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), for discriminating borderline patients from various comparison groups (Hurt, Clarkin, Frances, Abrams, & Hunt, 1985; Widiger, Sanderson, & Warner, 1986; Morey & Smith, 1988). Others have introduced new self-report scales aimed at specific aspects of the concept (Conte, Plutchik, Karasu, & Jerrett, 1980; Hyler et al., 1987; Gerson, 1984). It has been noted that self-report techniques offer a practical and valid means of obtaining information relevant to the diagnosis of BPD and other personality disorders (Hurt et al., 1985). The accumulation of data on self-report measures of BPD affords the opportunity to evaluate the construct validity of this diagnostic concept. This study will examine the relationships between three recently developed measures of borderline phenomena from the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI; Morey, 1991), the MMPI Personality Disorders Scales (MPD; Morey, Waugh, & Blashfield, 1985), and the Bell Object Relations Inventory (BORI; Bell, Billington, & Becker, 1986).

**Personality Assessment Inventory.** The PAI is a multiscale self-report measure of clinically relevant aspects of personality and psychopathology. The inventory was constructed using rational and empirical methods with an emphasis on convergent and discriminant validation procedures (Morey, 1991). A total of 344 items is scored on 21 major scales. A 24-item scale assesses borderline personality patterns with four 6-item borderline subscales: Affective Instability, Identity Problem, Negative Relationships, and Self-Harm. The item selection and standardization process for the PAI utilized sizable groups of both census-matched normal subjects (N = 1000) as well as clinical subjects from diverse treatment settings (N = 1246). Preliminary validity data for the Borderline scale are based on a group of 78 patients from the latter sample who were given a primary diagnosis of BPD. The mean age of this sample was 32.0 years, 70.5% were females, and 61.5% were inpatients. This BPD sample achieved a higher mean T score (T = 76) on the Borderline scale than any other diagnostic or behavioral subgroup in the clinical standardization sample. The borderline group was also distinguished by elevations on all four subscales (Morey, 1991).

**MMPI Personality Disorder Scales.** These scales were constructed, using items from the MMPI, by Morey, Waugh, and Blashfield (1985). A rational-empirical strategy was used to create scales that assess each of the eleven personality disorder categories from the DSM-III system (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). There is a 22-item Borderline scale that