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# Use of the binomial distribution and neuropsychological functioning to detect simulated symptoms of PTSD

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Claims of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are becoming more prevalent in civil and criminal court cases and other types of litigation. When conducting forensic examinations for PTSD, it is not generally feasible to know with certainty that the subjective complaints of a criminal defendant or litigant are reflective of genuine symptoms with a definite causal link to an external event. For this reason, the assessment of symptom validity is not only a rational approach in forensic assessments but also a mandated criterion in diagnostic testing when secondary gain is a potential factor. This is particularly essential in assessments for PTSD, which relies primarily on the veracity and accuracy of the examinee's self-report. The mutability of memories, the powerful influence of secondary gain, and the subjectivity of patient's self-reports make it very difficult to achieve reliable psychological evaluations for PTSD. Without objective empirical evidence to detect simulated symptoms of PTSD it is difficult for practitioners to follow the American Psychiatric Association's (APA; 2000) warning to rule out malingering in settings where "financial remuneration, benefit eligibility, and forensic determinations play a role". To reduce potential diagnostic errors, the Morel Emotional Numbing Test for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (MENT) was developed to provide empirically grounded probabilistic evidence to maximize confidence in forensic and clinical opinions. Based on the statistical principles of the binomial distribution and knowledge of neuropsychological functioning, the MENT is an individually administered, two-alternative forced-choice recognition test to indentify examinees that simulate symptoms of PTSD.

## Biography

Kenneth Morel has over 20 years of experience in behavioral sciences. He has worked as a Psychologist and Psychometrist for the Department of Defense in the Clinical Neuropsychology Service at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, the U.S. Navy's Exam Development Division, the Neuropsychiatry Branch of the National Institutes of Mental Health, the U.S. Army under the Army Medical Command at Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawai, and for the Department of Veterans Affairs. His expertise has been utilized as a reviewer for professional journals, such as the Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology, the Journal of Traumatic Stress, the Journal of Experimental Psychopathology, and the Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology. He is the developer of the Morel Emotional Numbing Test for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (MENT). The MENT has been translated into Vietnamese, Croatian, Dutch, German, and Turkish languages and has been used in the United States, Croatia, Germany, Canada, Netherlands, Switzerland, Israel, Great Britain, Afghanistan, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia. He received two Public Health Service Citations from the Department of Health and Human Services and various performance citations from the Department of Veterans Affairs, including Excellence in Research in 1995. He is a decorated military veteran of the U.S. Air Force and has also been awarded the Superior Civilian Service Medal by the U.S. Army Medical Command.

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