

Effect of Coaching Related Incompetency to Stand Trial on Symptom Validity Test: Robustness, Sensitivity, and Specificity

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Abstract : In forensic contexts, competency to stand trial assessments are the most common referrals. The defendants may attempt to endorse psychopathology symptoms and feign incompetent. Coaching, which can be teaching them test-taking strategies to avoid detection of psychopathological symptoms feigning. Recently, the Symptom Validity Testings (SVTs) were created to detect feigning. Moreover, the works of the literature showed that the effects of coaching on SVTs may be more robust to the effects of coaching. Thai Symptom Validity Test (SVT-Th) was designed as SVTs which demonstrated adequate psychometric properties and ability to classify between feigners and honest responders. Thus, the current study to examine the utility as the robustness of SVT-Th in the detection of feigned psychopathology. Participants consisted of 120 were recruited from undergraduate courses in psychology, randomly assigned to one of three groups. The SVT-Th was administered to those three scenario-experimental groups: (a) Uncoached group were asked to respond honestly (n=40), (b) Symptom-coached without warning group were asked to feign psychiatric symptoms to gain incompetency to stand trial (n=40), while (c) Test-coached with warning group were asked to feign psychiatric symptoms to avoid test detection but being incompetency to stand trial (n=40). Group differences were analyzed using one-way ANOVAs. The result revealed an uncoached group (M = 4.23, SD.= 5.20) had significantly lower SVT-Th mean scores than those both coached groups (M =185.00, SD.= 72.88 and M = 132.10, SD.= 54.06, respectively). Classification rates were calculated to determine the classification accuracy. Result indicated that SVT-Th had overall classification accuracy rates of 96.67% with acceptable of 95% sensitivity and 100% specificity rates. Overall, the results of the present study indicate that the SVT-Th yielded high adequate indices of accuracy and these findings suggest that the SVT-Th is robustness against coaching.

Keywords : incompetency to stand trial, coaching, robustness, classification accuracy

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