



D54 Detecting Deceit: Exposing the Malingerer

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This presentation will provide attendees with a brief historical overview into the art and science of lie detection, with an introduction to the most recent advances in brain imaging technology. The forensic examiner will be able to identify common characteristics seen in malingererers, and once the potential malingerer is identified, the evaluator will be familiar with psychological instruments and other tools commonly used to help clarify the diagnosis. The presenters will also share practical clinical insights based on their experience working as forensic court-appointed examiners in one of the largest criminal court systems in the country (Cook County, Illinois).

Malingering – the intentional production of false or grossly exaggerated physical/ psychological symptoms motivated by external incentives – often presents itself within the course of forensic evaluations, bringing into question the integrity of the data gathered. Whether in the context of avoiding incarceration (criminal arena) or garnering potentially large monetary awards (civil arena), the probability of malingering increases with the value of the perceived gain, especially in the psychological realm. A forensic examiner is often left with the difficult task of separating truth from fabrication. Additionally, when there are no laboratory tests available to corroborate an examinee's self-report, this task becomes an exceedingly challenging one. Traditional tests of lie detection have been predicated on the theory that an individual who intentionally misleads experiences increased anxiety which can then be measured physiologically (e.g., skin temperature, sweating, heart rate, etc). Unfortunately, the accuracy of such tests comes into question when the act of lying produces little, if any, anxiety. Technological advances in brain imaging including fMRI (functional MRI) are beginning to show future promise as more reliable methods of lie detection. Until then, there currently exist instruments available to the forensic examiner which can be useful in assessing an examinee's self-report in the following areas: memory impairment, cognitive impairment, and psychological symptoms. These tests, along with clinical observations, become crucial components in the evaluation of a suspected malingerer.

Malingering, Detection, Evaluation