



Ciencias Psicológicas

ISSN: 1688-4094

ISSN: 1688-4221

Universidad Católica del Uruguay.

Arbach, Karin; Barboni, Lucía; Mercurio, Ezequiel
Prácticas de evaluación psicológica en ámbitos jurídicos: Una encuesta a profesionales de Latinoamérica
Ciencias Psicológicas, vol. 18, no. 1, e3652, 2024
Universidad Católica del Uruguay.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22235/cp.v18i1.3652>

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=459578426012>

- How to cite
- Complete issue
- More information about this article
- Journal's webpage in redalyc.org

UNEM  redalyc.org

Scientific Information System Redalyc
Network of Scientific Journals from Latin America and the Caribbean, Spain and
Portugal

Project academic non-profit, developed under the open access initiative

Psychological assessment practices in legal contexts: A survey to professionals from Latin-America

Prácticas de evaluación psicológica en ámbitos jurídicos:
Una encuesta a profesionales de Latinoamérica

Práticas de avaliação psicológica em âmbitos jurídicos: Uma pesquisa com
profissionais da América Latina

 Karin Arbach¹
 Lucía Barboni²
 Ezequiel Mercurio³

¹ Universidad Nacional de
Córdoba; Conicet

² Universidad Católica del Uruguay

³ Defensoría General de la Nación
Argentina

Received: 08/25/2023

Accepted: 04/24/2024

Correspondence:

Karin Arbach,
k_urbach@unc.edu.ar

How to cite:

Arbach, K., Barboni, L., & Mercurio, E. (2024). Psychological assessment practices in legal contexts: A survey to professionals from Latin-America. *Ciencias Psicológicas*, 18(1), e-3652. <https://doi.org/10.22235/cp.v18i1.3652>

Data availability: The data set used in this research is available upon request from the first author.

Funding: This project received partial financial support from the Consolidar Project, allocated by the Secretariat of Science and Technology at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Res. SECyT 2018 – n.º 411.

Abstract: This study explores practices of psychological assessment within five frequently researched areas in legal contexts: mental state during the offense, risk of general violence, risk of sexual violence, simulation, and psychological harm. A total of 191 psychologists from 10 Latin American countries who practice within legal domains took part in an online survey. Three key findings emerged from their responses and were consistent across all five assessment areas: a) the predominant use of the interview, followed by multi-scale personality inventories, and projective tests; b) a preference for nonspecific assessment techniques, rather than specific approaches tailored to each area; and c) comparing regions, a preference for projective tests and the Rorschach test in Argentina, followed by other South American countries. In contrast, standardized tests, such as multi-scale personality inventories, clinical scales, and cognitive assessment methods, found favor in Central American regions. The findings are discussed from a comparative perspective, with their academic, technical, and ethical implications.

Keywords: psychological assessment, legal field; mental state; risk of violence; simulation; psychological harm; Latin America

Resumen: Este estudio analiza las prácticas de evaluación psicológica en cinco áreas frecuentemente exploradas en ámbitos jurídicos: el estado mental al momento del delito, el riesgo de violencia general, el riesgo de violencia sexual, la simulación y el daño psicológico. Un total de 191 psicólogos de 10 países que ejercen su práctica en ámbitos jurídicos de Latinoamérica respondieron una encuesta en Internet. A partir de sus respuestas se extrajeron tres hallazgos principales que fueron consistentes en las cinco áreas de evaluación: a) el uso predominante de la entrevista, seguido de los inventarios multiescala de personalidad y las pruebas proyectivas, b) un uso más frecuente de técnicas de evaluación inespecíficas, en comparación a las específicas para cada área y, finalmente, c) las comparaciones entre regiones indican una preferencia por pruebas proyectivas y el test de Rorschach en Argentina, seguida por los otros países sudamericanos, y una preferencia por pruebas estandarizadas en Centroamérica, como los inventarios multiescala de personalidad, las escalas clínicas y las técnicas de evaluación cognitiva. Se discuten los hallazgos desde una perspectiva comparada y considerando sus implicancias académicas, técnicas y deontológicas.

Palabras clave: evaluación psicológica; ámbito jurídico; estado mental; riesgo de violencia; simulación; daño psicológico; Latinoamérica

Resumo: Este estudo analisa as práticas de avaliação psicológica em cinco áreas frequentemente exploradas em contextos jurídicos: o estado mental no momento do delito, o risco de violência geral, o risco de violência sexual, a simulação e o dano psicológico. Um total de 191 psicólogos que atuam em âmbitos jurídicos de 10 países da América Latina responderam a uma pesquisa pela Internet. A partir de suas respostas, foram extraídas três descobertas principais consistentes nas cinco áreas de avaliação: a) o uso predominante da entrevista, seguido por inventários de personalidade multiescala e testes projetivos, b) um uso mais frequente de técnicas de avaliação inespecíficas em comparação com as



específicas para cada área e, finalmente, c) as comparações entre regiões indicam uma preferência por testes projetivos e o Teste de Rorschach na Argentina, seguido pelos outros países sul-americanos; e uma preferência por testes padronizados na América Central, como inventários de personalidade multiescala, escalas clínicas e técnicas de avaliação cognitiva. Os achados são discutidos a partir de uma perspectiva comparativa, e considerando suas implicações acadêmicas, técnicas e deontológicas.

Palavras-chave: avaliação psicológica; contexto jurídico; estado mental; risco de violência; simulação; dano psicológico; América Latina

The psychological assessment required in legal settings offers specific knowledge that differs from that of judges and juries (Younan & Martire, 2021) and of clinical-care contexts (Arellano & Rivera Heredia, 2021; Echeburúa et al., 2011). The techniques employed in these assessments, as well as the results derived by experts from their use, must be relevant and reliable in relation to the question they address, since they influence judicial decisions that affect individual liberties and public safety (Bonventre, 2021; Garrett & Neufeld, 2009).

Through qualitative reviews and analysis of legal documents, studies have identified certain critical points of psychological assessments in legal contexts in, for example, the United States, England, and Spain (Grisso, 2010; Ireland, 2012; Muñoz Vicente & López Ossorio, 2016). These include the absence of underlying psychological theories, the use of psychometric tests that are designed for other contexts, accusations that are interpreted as facts, evaluators with limited qualifications, a failure to specify the technical criteria followed and the limitations of the assessment, the absence of collateral sources of information, and the use of inappropriate language. In Chile, papers have also been published questioning the reliability and validity of certain expert opinions, and the level of specialization and training of the experts (Duce, 2018a, 2018b; Quijada, 2011).

With the aim of reducing these limitations, some countries have established regulations to ensure the scientific rigor of the evidence admitted in judicial proceedings (National Research Council, 2009; President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, 2016). In the United States, the Daubert criteria guide the admissibility of expert testimony based on compliance with the following conditions (Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc., 1993): a) the method used by the expert must have empirical support, b) the error rate of the method used must be known (either effectively or potentially), c) the methodology used must be supported by peer-reviewed publications in scientific journals, and d) be generally accepted by the scientific community. The latter criterion, known as Frye, was the only one used for decades prior to the definition of the Daubert criteria (Frye v. U.S., 1923).

Guidelines have also been generated to establish good practices in psychological assessment in legal settings (American Psychological Association [APA], 2013; Australian Psychological Society, 2014). These guide the work of professionals through unified, revisable criteria that promote the quality and homogeneity of practices in an environment in which methodological and scientific precision and rigor are essential for ethical and reliable practice (APA, 2013). Likewise, numerous international publications establish recommendations and quality criteria applicable to professional practice in legal settings (e.g., Combalbert et al., 2014; Grisso, 2010; Heilbrun, Grisso, et al., 2008; Juárez & Lira Mendiguren, 2020; Otto et al., 2014; Young, 2016). In the Spanish-speaking context, there are significant contributions from Spain (e.g., Asociación de Psicólogos Forenses de la Administración de Justicia [APF], 2018; Colegio Oficial de Psicólogos de Catalunya [COPC], 2016; Garrido Gaitán et al., 2023) and, in Latin America, several institutions have published their own work protocols related to the legal and social contexts of each country (e.g., Instituto de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses, 2016 in Peru; Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses, 2010 in Colombia).

Studies on psychological assessment practices in legal settings

Over the past three decades, studies have been conducted that administer surveys to samples of professionals to determine the extent to which their practices conform to these protocols and guidelines. One of the most referenced surveys was conducted in the mid-1990s with a sample of 200 forensic psychologists and psychiatrists in the United States (Borum & Grisso, 1995). The most used techniques were intelligence and cognitive tests, mainly the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS; Wechsler, 1981), and objective personality tests, primarily the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI; Hathaway, 1982). About a quarter of the professionals reported using projective tests. Some years later, in another US survey, more than 80 % of a sample of 64 accredited forensic psychologists considered that, while psychometric tests such as the WAIS and MMPI scales were acceptable and

recommended in assessments in legal contexts, projective techniques were unacceptable, and between 52 % and 63 % included the Rorschach test as unacceptable (Lally, 2003).

A few years later, 152 doctoral graduates with an average of 15 years in forensic practice responded to an Internet survey on the frequency of use of 10 types of psychological tests in forensic assessments (Archer et al., 2006). The results were consistent with those reported in previous surveys, with multiscale personality inventories and cognitive and performance tests being the most used techniques (by 86 % and 82 % of respondents, respectively), followed by specific simulation tests (72 %). The least used techniques were unstructured personality tests, with only 36 % using these, mostly the Rorschach test (Archer et al., 2006).

After two decades of development and the wide dissemination of specific techniques for structured violence risk assessment, the first web-based survey exploring their use was conducted in late 2012 among 2,135 forensic mental health professionals of 44 countries (Singh et al., 2014). More than half (54 %) reported performing these assessments using a specific technique, either actuarial or structured professional judgment (SPJ), but this proportion varied significantly across regions. Asian and South American professionals reported the lowest proportion of assessments using specific techniques. The HCR-20 Guide for Risk Assessment of Violent Behavior (Webster et al., 1997) and the Psychopathy Checklists (PCL; Hare, 2003) were those most used in all regions.

In the last decade, surveys of experts in forensic psychology and psychiatry in high-income countries (e.g., United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and several European countries) show a steady increase in the use of structured techniques and in the number of techniques employed, with a sustained preference for versions of the MMPI and the progressive incorporation of the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI; Morey, 1991) (Neal & Grisso, 2014b). An increase in the use of techniques specifically developed for legal settings has also been reported in these regions. For example, a survey in Canada found that between 33 % and 50 % of a total of 110 psychologists employed specific forensic techniques when assessing response styles, such as the Test of Simulated Memory Problems (TOMM; Tombaugh, 1996), and the Paulhus Deception Scales (PDS; Paulhus, 1998). Between 50 % and 67 % employed actuarial and structured professional judgment techniques, such as the HCR-20 and the Violence Risk Assessment Guide (VRAG; Quinsey et al., 2006) for violence risk assessments (Hill & Demetriooff, 2019).

Surveys of psychological assessment practices in legal contexts have also been conducted in Latin America. In 2006, 167 forensic psychologists in Chile with an average of 4.3 years in practice responded to an online survey. Seventy-five percent reported having received no specific forensic training before working in this area, and 25 % had still not received any at the time of the survey. As reported by professionals from Anglo-Saxon countries, here too the technique most used in assessments was the interview (99 % used it), with projective techniques in second place (97 % used them). Psychometric instruments were used by half of the professionals, and only 1 out of 5 used assessment instruments specific to the legal field (Navarro & Gudjonsson, 2008).

Another study from the region reported data for Argentina and Chile obtained from an international survey by Singh et al. (2014). Professionals reported employing specific violence risk assessment tools in approximately half (53 %) of the violence risk assessments they conducted (Singh et al., 2013). This survey used closed-ended questions mentioning specific instruments designed and validated in other countries, and this may have generated a social desirability bias in the responses. To counteract this possibility and to deepen the theoretical frameworks underlying technique selection, a new survey with open-ended questions was designed and subsequently categorized, which was answered by 71 forensic psychologists of Latin America (Arbach et al., 2017). The responses indicated a more frequent use of projective techniques for violence risk assessment, at the expense of the use of specific instruments for this task. Finally, in a survey of 30 professionals working in the field of legal psychology in Uruguay, the majority (86 %) reported using projective tests while only 21 % used specific violence risk assessment instruments (Barboni & Bonilla, 2019).

In summary, the studies reviewed reveal a gradual shift in the context of high-income countries toward the adoption of structured and specific psychological assessment tools in various areas that are relevant to legal contexts (Archer et al., 2006; Borum & Grisso, 1995; Hill & Demetriooff, 2019). This shift responds to a growing understanding of the importance of grounding professional practice in methodologies with demonstrable accuracy and validity, especially in situations where

decisions may have a massive impact on the lives of those involved (Lally, 2003). This change seems more evident in North American and European countries, but, in Latin America, the use of unstructured and nonspecific instruments predominates, mainly using projective techniques (Arbach et al., 2017; Barboni & Bonilla, 2019; Navarro & Gudjonsson, 2008).

It may be beneficial for mental health professionals in legal settings, who must decide daily on the techniques to be used, to keep their knowledge of these practices up to date, as well as for judges and prosecutors, by informing them to what extent local practices align (or do not align) with the scientific criteria that typically regulate the admissibility of evidence provided by psychologists in other legal contexts. For this reason, the present study aims to update the evidence on the usual assessment practices of Latin American psychological professionals in five areas of legal relevance previously studied (e.g., Arbach et al., 2017; Archer et al., 2006; Lally, 2003): mental state at the time of the crime, risk of general violence, risk of sexual violence, simulation, and psychological harm.

Materials and methods

Research design

An empirical, quantitative, descriptive, *ex post facto*, cross-sectional study, using a survey and a non-probabilistic sample (Montero & León, 2007).

Participants

The participants in this study were 191 psychologists practicing in any Latin American country who voluntarily responded anonymously to an Internet survey, 76.4 % of whom were women ($n = 146$). The mean age was 42.08 years ($SD = 9.34$), ranging from 23 to 74 years with no significant differences in age by sex ($t(61.51) = -0.46$, $p = .650$). Professionals from 10 Latin American countries participated in the survey. For comparative analysis purposes, the countries were grouped into three regions: *Argentina* was kept as a single region because it was the country with the highest number of participants. The remaining countries were grouped as follows: *Rest of South America* [in brackets the number of participants per country] (Venezuela [1], Uruguay [18], Chile [11], Colombia [6], Peru [5], Ecuador [5]); and *Central America* (Guatemala [1], Costa Rica [28], Mexico [11]).

Procedure and materials

The survey was designed in the Google Forms platform and consisted of direct closed-answer questions grouped into five sections: a) *Sociodemographic characteristics* (sex, age, country), b) *General academic training* (profession, educational level, year, and university where degree was obtained), c) *Forensic-specific training* (type of training, type of institution, year of that training, and year of last update), d) *Forensic professional practice* (field, hours per week, years, current country, minimum requirements), e) *Psychological assessment areas*: For each area (mental state at the time of the crime, risk of general violence, risk of sexual violence, simulation and psychological harm), we asked about the number of assessments in the last year and the frequency of use of a series of techniques selected *ad hoc* for each area (from 0 = *never* to 4 = *very frequently*). The techniques were proposed along with examples, as follows: interview, Rorschach test, projective tests (e.g., TAT, HTP), multiscale personality inventories (e.g., MMPI, PAI, MCMI), neuropsychological tests (e.g., Barcelona Test, Bender Test, Wisconsin Test), cognitive and ability assessment techniques (e.g., Wechsler scales), actuarial instruments for violence risk assessment (e.g., VRAG, COVR), structured professional judgment guides for violence risk assessment (e.g. HCR-20, SVR-20), psychopathy assessment checklists (e.g. PCL-R, PCL:SV), clinical psychopathological assessment scales (e.g. SCL-90, BDI, STAI), specific techniques for the assessment of simulation (e.g., SIRS, TOMM), post-traumatic stress disorder assessment instruments (e.g., PSS scales, CAPS-I, SPRINT), and others.

Initially, a pilot test was conducted with three professionals who analyzed aspects of comprehensibility or fatigue that could affect the reliability or validity of the responses (Bhattacharjee, 2012). After the adjustments suggested, the survey was disseminated via email and on social networks (Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and Instagram) from April 23 to August 28, 2021. Periodic reminders were sent on the three Fridays following the launch, forwarding an e-mail, and making a new publication in the networks (see Sánchez Fernández et al., 2009). It was not possible to control the number of people who had actual contact with the survey because, due to ethical considerations, no confirmation of message receipt or user registration was requested. Respondents could complete the survey only once, all questions required responses to proceed with the survey, a 'not applicable' response option or

similar was always provided. The survey administration followed the recommendations of the *Checklist for Reporting Results of Internet E-Surveys* protocol (Eysenbach, 2004).

Ethical considerations

The protocol of this study was evaluated by the Ethics Committee of the Instituto de Investigaciones Psicológicas of the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba with a subsequent favorable approval on December 11, 2020. The survey commenced with an information sheet, followed by the informed consent form.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22. Analyses of absolute and relative frequency distributions were conducted, and the results presented in contingency tables. Means and standard deviations were calculated for interval variables. To assess whether the variables showed variations in their distribution across regions, comparisons were conducted using contingency tables, and the *Chi-Square* statistic was calculated to test the hypothesis of independence between groups.

Results

Academic training and professional practice

Table 1 presents the academic characteristics of the professionals. Approximately half ($n = 90$) indicated having completed specific and accredited training in legal psychology or a related area. Of these, 64 did so at a university and the rest at an association or institution other than a university, generally professional associations or training schools attached to legal or police institutions. Another 47 were undergoing specific and accredited training at the time of the survey, 41 at a university and 6 at different institutions. There was a significant negative correlation between age and the year in which specific and accredited training was completed ($r = -.36$, $p < .001$), indicating that the younger professionals tended to have more complete and up-to-date training.

Table 1*Academic characteristics of participants*

	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Highest educational level</i>		
Bachelor's Degree	48	25.1
Postgraduate/Diploma (6 to 12 months)	30	15.7
Specialty (1 to 3 years)	54	28.3
Master's Degree	47	24.6
PhD	12	6.3
<i>Year of obtaining highest degree (M, DS, range)</i>	2013 (7.1)	1990 to 2020
<i>Highest level of training in Forensic Mental Health</i>		
Complete	90	47.1
Undergraduate subjects	22	11.5
Short postgraduate course ^a	33	17.3
Extensive postgraduate studies ^b	37	19.4
Master's Degree	23	12.0
PhD	2	1.0
<i>Year completed (M, SD, range)</i>	2015 (6.0)	1990 to 2021
With university accreditation	64	33.5
Ongoing	47	24.6
Undergraduate subjects	2	1.0
Short postgraduate course	4	2.1
Extensive postgraduate studies	33	17.3
Master's Degree	6	3.0
PhD	2	1.0
With university accreditation	41	21.5
None	54	28.3

Notes. ^a Less than 6 months. ^b 1 to 2 years.

Table 2 presents aspects of professional practice. Seventy-five percent of respondents had five or more years of practice and reported different requirements for conducting psychological assessments in the legal settings in which they practiced. The minimum reported requirement was associated with the practitioner's region ($\chi^2(4) = 13.80, p = .008$). Some 17.5 % of practitioners in Central America reported that a specialty or higher level was required, while that proportion was 15.2 % in the rest of South America and 7.7 % in Argentina. Notably, in no case did all the participants from the same country or region agree on the minimum requirement. On the contrary, their responses were dispersed across the different categories. Those with a higher level of education tended to report a more restrictive minimum level requirement (i.e., a higher academic degree) than those with a lower academic degree ($c^2(8) = 32.19, p < .001$).

Table 2*Professional practice in Forensic Mental Health: years, country and requirements*

	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Years in practice</i>		
< 5	47	24.6
5 to 10	56	29.3
10 to 20	67	35.1
> 20	21	11.0
<i>Country of practice</i>		
Argentina	105	55.0
Rest of South America	46	24.1
Central America	40	20.9
<i>Minimum requirement to practice in your country¹</i>		
Undergraduate/Bachelor's Degree	169	88.5
Specialty/Diploma	17	8.9
Master's Degree	5	2.6

Note. ¹ In order to practice your professional activity in legal contexts in your country, what is the minimum academic requirement?

Assessment areas

State of mind at the time of the act or imputability

Among those who conducted assessments in this area in the past year ($n = 130$, 68.1 %), the interview was the most frequently used technique followed by personality inventories (Table 3). There were significant variations in the frequency of use of techniques across regions, with a tendency in Argentina and South America to use projective tests, and in Central America to use structured instruments (e.g., personality inventories, cognitive assessment tests, ability tests, clinical scales). The footnotes to each table detail the differences found between regions.

Table 3*Assessment of mental status or non-imputability: Use of techniques in the past year ($n = 130$)*

Techniques used	Never	Rarely	Some times	Very often
	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)
Interview	4 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	4 (3.1)	122 (93.8)
Rorschach	70 (36.6)	20 (15.4)	19 (14.6)	21 (16.2)
Projective tests**a	55 (42.3)	12 (9.2)	17 (13.1)	46 (35.4)
Personality inventories**b	26 (20.0)	23 (17.7)	27 (20.8)	54 (41.5)
Neuropsychological tests	31 (23.8)	26 (20.0)	27 (20.8)	46 (35.4)
Cognitive and capacity assessment techniques***b	50 (38.5)	34 (26.2)	27 (20.8)	19 (14.6)
Actuarial Instruments**b	68 (52.3)	17 (13.1)	26 (20.0)	19 (14.6)
SPJ Guides***c	59 (45.4)	25 (19.2)	25 (19.2)	21 (16.2)
Psychopathy checklist**c	62 (47.7)	26 (20.0)	25 (19.2)	17 (13.1)
Clinical scales**b	46 (35.4)	25 (19.2)	20 (15.4)	39 (30.0)
Simulation techniques*b	74 (56.9)	22 (16.9)	26 (20.0)	8 (6.2)
Other	64 (49.2)	19 (14.6)	18 (13.8)	29 (22.3)

Notes. SPJ: Structured Professional Judgment. The asterisks indicate significant differences according to regions at the level of * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$. ^a More frequent use in Argentina, followed by South America. ^b More frequent use in Central America, followed by South America. ^c More frequent use in Central America, followed by Argentina. The "Very often" category is the reference.

Risk of general violence

More than two-thirds of professionals ($n = 138$, 72.3 %) had conducted at least one general violence risk assessment in the past year. Again, the most frequently employed techniques were the interview, followed by personality inventories (Table 4). Structured professional judgment (SPJ) guides for violence risk assessment are specific instruments for this task, but their use was reported less frequently than other non-specific instruments such as projective tests and clinical scales. Variations by region were similar to those reported above, with a preference in Argentina and South America for projective techniques and the Rorschach in these assessments, in contrast to Central America where psychometric tests were preferred. However, there were no differences between regions in the frequency of use of specific techniques for violence risk assessment (actuarial or SPJ).

Table 4

General violence risk assessment: Use of techniques in the last year ($n = 138$)

Techniques used	Never	Rarely times	Some times	Very often
	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)
Interview	4 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	7 (5.1)	127 (92)
Rorschach * ^a	82 (59.4)	23 (16.7)	12 (8.7)	21 (15.2)
Projective tests** ^a	65 (47.1)	18 (13.0)	16 (11.6)	39 (28.3)
Personality Inventories*** ^c	41 (29.7)	21 (15.2)	30 (21.7)	46 (33.3)
Neuropsychological tests* ^c	62 (44.9)	21 (15.2)	27 (19.6)	28 (20.3)
Cognitive and capacity assessment techniques *** ^b	78 (56.5)	19 (13.8)	27 (19.6)	14 (10.1)
Actuarial instruments	61 (44.2)	24 (17.4)	27 (19.6)	36 (18.8)
SPJ Guides	56 (40.6)	26 (18.8)	24 (17.4)	32 (23.2)
Psychopathy checklist ^c	74 (53.6)	25 (18.1)	21 (15.2)	18 (13.0)
Clinical scales*** ^b	56 (40.6)	22 (15.9)	23 (16.7)	37 (26.8)
Simulation techniques	85 (61.6)	22 (15.9)	19 (13.8)	12 (8.7)
Other	70 (50.7)	16 (11.6)	20 (14.5)	32 (23.2)

Notes. SPJ: Structured Professional Judgment. Asterisks indicate significant differences by region at the $*p < .05$ $**p < .01$ $***p < .001$ level. ^a More frequent use in Argentina, followed by South America. ^b More frequent use in Central America, followed by South America. ^c More frequent use in Central America, followed by Argentina. The "Very often" category is the reference.

Risk of sexual violence

Two-thirds of the participants indicated having conducted risk assessment for sexual violence in the past year ($n = 124$, 65.8 %). As in the case of general violence, interview and personality inventories were used more frequently here (Table 5). Specific instruments (SPJ guides and actuarial instruments) were used less frequently than non-specific instruments, such as projective tests and clinical scales. Regarding regional differences, the same trend was observed toward the use of projective techniques and Rorschach in Argentina and South America, and psychometric tests in Central America.

Table 5*Sexual violence risk assessment: Use of techniques in the past year (n = 124)*

Techniques used	Never	Rarely times	Some times	Very often
	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)
Interview	1 (0.8)	2 (1.6)	4 (3.2)	117 (94.4)
Rorschach * ^a	70 (56.5)	16 (12.9)	21 (16.9)	17 (13.7)
Projective tests** ^a	54 (43.5)	11 (8.9)	14 (11.3)	45 (36.3)
Personality inventories** ^c	36 (29.0)	18 (14.5)	18 (14.5)	52 (41.9)
Neuropsychological tests* ^c	55 (44.4)	16 (12.9)	26 (21.0)	27 (21.8)
Cognitive and capacity assessment techniques*** ^b	68 (54.8)	19 (15.3)	21 (16.9)	16 (12.9)
Actuarial instruments	61 (49.2)	23 (18.5)	23 (18.5)	17 (13.7)
SPJ Guides	53 (42.7)	24 (19.4)	20 (16.1)	27 (21.8)
Psychopathy checklist	63 (50.8)	22 (17.7)	19 (15.3)	20 (16.1)
Clinical scales*** ^b	56 (45.2)	17 (13.7)	16 (12.9)	35 (28.2)
Simulation techniques	73 (58.9)	22 (17.7)	23 (17.7)	6 (4.8)
Other	68 (54.8)	14 (11.3)	20 (16.1)	22 (17.7)

Notes. SPJ: Structured Professional Judgment. Asterisks indicate significant differences by region at the * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ level. ^a More frequent use in Argentina, followed by South America. ^b More frequent use in Central America, followed by South America. ^c More frequent use in Central America, followed by Argentina. The "Very often" category is the reference.

Simulation

Slightly more than half of the respondents conducted at least one such assessment in the past year ($n = 99$; 51.8 %). The results were similar to those reported for other areas of assessment. That is, the most commonly employed techniques were the interview, followed by personality inventories (Table 6). Specific techniques (e.g., TOMM) were used less frequently than non-specific instruments, such as clinical scales and projective tests. Finally, the differences between regions follow the trend reported in the previous sections, with the exception of neuropsychological tests, which are reported, for the first time, to be used more frequently in Argentina.

Table 6*Simulation Assessment: Use of techniques in the past year (n = 99)*

Techniques used	Never	Rarely	Some times	Very often
	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)
Interview** a	2 (2.0)	3 (3.0)	3 (3.0)	91 (91.9)
Rorschach* a	49 (49.5)	12 (12.1)	13 (13.1)	25 (25.3)
Projective tests* a	43 (43.4)	7 (7.1)	12 (12.1)	37 (37.4)
Personality inventories	20 (20.2)	11 (11.1)	18 (18.2)	50 (50.5)
Neuropsychological tests* d	35 (35.4)	14 (14.1)	19 (19.2)	31 (31.1)
Cognitive and capacity assessment techniques** b	47 (17.5)	15 (15.2)	23 (23.2)	14 (14.1)
Actuarial instruments *** b	53 (53.5)	15 (15.2)	22 (22.2)	9 (9.1)
SPJ Guides ***c	48 (48.5)	16 (16.2)	21 (21.2)	14 (14.1)
Psychopathy checklist*** c	50 (50.5)	13 (13.1)	18 (18.2)	18 (18.2)
Clinical scales* b	34 (34.3)	11 (11.1)	23 (23.2)	31 (31.3)
Simulation Techniques*** b	44 (44.4)	14 (14.1)	22 (22.2)	19 (19.2)
Other	42 (42.2)	10 (10.1)	21 (21.2)	26 (26.3)

Notes. SPJ: Structured Professional Judgment. Asterisks indicate significant differences by region at the * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ level. ^a More frequent use in Argentina, followed by South America. ^b More frequent use in Central America, followed by South America. ^c More frequent use in Central America, followed by Argentina. ^d More frequent use in Argentina, followed by Central America. The "Very often" category is the reference.

Psychological harm

A total of 138 professionals (72.3 %) assessed psychological harm in the last year. The data show the three findings reported in previous tables (Table 7): a) a predominant use of the interview, followed by personality inventories, b) a more frequent use of non-specific techniques (e.g. clinical scales and projective tests) than specific techniques (in this case, PTSD assessment tests), and finally, c) a preference for projective techniques and the Rorschach in Argentina, compared to Central America where psychometric tests are more frequently used.

Table 7*Psychological harm assessment: Use of techniques in the last year (n=138)*

Techniques used	Never	Rarely	Some times	Very often
	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)
Interview	3 (2.2)	1 (0.7)	1 (0.7)	133 (96.4)
Rorschach** a	72 (52.2)	18 (13.9)	20 (14.5)	28 (20.3)
Projective Tests*** a	55 (39.9)	9 (6.5)	20 (14.5)	54 (28.3)
Personality inventories**b	40 (29.0)	17 (12.3)	28 (20.3)	53 (38.4)
Neuropsychological tests	55 (39.9)	13 (9.4)	28 (20.3)	42 (30.4)
Cognitive and capacity assessment techniques *b	72 (52.2)	21 (15.2)	27 (19.6)	18 (13.0)
PTSD Techniques* b	50 (36.2)	19 (13.8)	23 (16.7)	46 (33.3)
Clinical scales*** b	47 (34.1)	16 (11.6)	26 (18.8)	49 (35.5)
Simulation techniques	77 (55.8)	22 (15.9)	26 (18.8)	13 (9.4)
Other	63 (45.7)	20 (14.5)	20 (14.5)	35 (25.4)

Notes. Asterisks indicate significant differences by region at * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$. ^a More frequent use in Argentina, followed by South America. ^b More frequent use in Central America, followed by South America. The "Very often" category is the reference.

Discussion

This study explores psychological assessment practices in legal contexts in a sample of professionals from 10 Latin American countries. Empirical antecedents showed differences in these practices between professionals from European and Anglo-Saxon countries on the one hand (Archer et al., 2006; Lally, 2003; Neal & Grisso, 2014b), and from Latin American countries on the other (Arbach et al., 2017; Barboni & Bonilla, 2019; Navarro & Gudjonsson, 2008). In the latter, a more frequent use of unstructured techniques over structured ones has been reported, as well as less academic specialization in the area. In general terms, the answers provided by the 191 professionals who responded to our survey suggest that these trends continue at present and that there are significant differences between countries in the region in terms of the preferential use of some techniques over others.

Specific academic training and professional practice

The absence of specific accredited training in legal psychology (or related areas) in approximately a quarter of the participants indicates that accreditation of specific knowledge for professional practice in this field is not a widespread requirement in the region (Quintero et al., 2020). However, exclusive reliance on undergraduate training may carry its risks given that it will tend to be generalist, rather than specific (Benito, 2009). In fact, only a small proportion of professionals indicated having obtained specific training in legal psychology or related areas in their undergraduate training. This may be related to the fact that until recently there was a relative lack of specific postgraduate offerings in this region (Barboni & Bonilla, 2022; Quintero et al., 2020).

The striking reactivation of Legal and Forensic Psychology in the United States and Europe around the 1960s, strongly reinforced since the 1980s, promoted the proliferation of professional associations, academic societies, conferences and journal publications, fundamentally regulated by principles of scientificity (Fariña et al., 2005; Heilbrun, DeMatteo, et al., 2008). This phenomenon does not seem to have been replicated with the same intensity generally in Latin America (see Goldstein et al., 2015).

There are indications that those practitioners who rely more on clinical judgment will be less likely to use instruments, while the reverse is true for those who prioritize evidence-based practices and standardization of assessment processes (Neal & Grisso, 2014b). The preference for clinical judgment in decision-making, rather than an evidence-based model (see Ægisdóttir et al., 2006), goes back to the direct antecedent of the Daubert criteria, known as the Frye criteria (Frye v. U.S., 1923), whereby the admissibility of a test was established on the basis only of the general acceptance of the test in its disciplinary field. Progressively it has been shown that this single criterion is not sufficient and others were added to strengthen the scientific basis of the evidence. In recent years, there has been a marked development of guidelines for good practice in psychological assessment for experts in legal contexts (Dror & Murrie, 2018; Neal et al., 2022).

Our results suggest that the incorporation of scientific criteria in psychological assessment in legal settings is an ongoing process in this region, given that a greater proportion of the youngest reported having specific training. This may indicate a trend in Latin America towards accreditable professional specialization and the regulation of the necessary requirements for professional practice in this field. In this context, good practice guidelines play an essential role, and, in the Spanish-speaking world, Spain is one example of their development and application (e.g., APF, 2018; COPC et al., 2016).

Despite the limitations found in the survey in the specific training of the professionals, when it was present, it was quite recent (on average, it had occurred in the previous 6 years), which suggests that the professionals, especially the younger ones, are quite up-to-date. However, this finding still raises the question of the curricular contents of the professional training offered, and to what extent these contemplate the scientific standards that the discipline has reached elsewhere.

The answers to the question on the minimum requirements for professional practice in legal areas in each country varied, even among professionals from the same country. This points to the need to establish, communicate, and precisely regulate the minimum requirements for professional practice in this area of great disciplinary specificity. Because of this specificity and its ethical implications, professionals should know this information unequivocally (APA, 2013). Otherwise, there will remain biased practices and beliefs, as indicated by the finding that those with a higher educational level (e.g., master's or doctorate) tended to report higher requirements for professional practice.

Psychological assessment practices in legal contexts

With greater or lesser levels of specialized training, between 40 % and 60 % of the respondents carried out assessments in the areas analyzed. The most frequent were assessments of the risk of general violence and psychological harm, followed by assessments of mental state at the time of the event or non-imputability. Virtually all respondents reported using the interview as an assessment tool in all areas. Given that we did not ask whether the interviews were open-ended or semi-structured, it would be of interest in future studies to explore the level of structure used in these interviews and how it is established. This is essential because, in general, the instruments proposed in this survey are not accompanied by an interview guide, nor is accreditation for their use required in a binding manner. This may cast doubt on the reliability of the data collected in the assessments, and could also explain the lack of evaluator qualification reported in some studies (Ireland, 2012; Muñoz Vicente & López Ossorio, 2016).

In general, the most frequently employed techniques in the assessment areas explored here were the same. That is, the interview was clearly in first place, followed by multiscale personality inventories, projective techniques, and clinical scales, respectively. Only in the assessment of mental status did neuropsychological techniques rank above clinical scales. Overall, the results indicated the use in legal settings of techniques originally designed for clinical settings. Although the differences between these settings and their implications have been historically pointed out (Echeburúa et al., 2011; Greenberg & Shuman, 1997; Heilbrun, 1992), the choice of instruments reported in this survey indicates a limited use in Latin America of specific techniques for the legal field. For example, in the assessment of the risk of violence, both general and sexual, there was a preference for the use of personality inventories, projective tests and clinical scales, rather than the actuarial instruments and structured professional judgment guides that are specific to these assessments. These practices may be based on theoretical frameworks with predominantly classical psychiatric or psychopathological conceptions of dangerousness, considering violence as an emergent of a mental alteration or a particular personality trait (Andrés Pueyo & Arbach, 2014). A previous study indicated this (Arbach et al., 2017), and what is found here seems to show that it has not substantially changed. This occurs despite the evidence on the good psychometric properties shown by specific violence risk assessment tools in Latin American population samples (Arbach & Folino, 2021; E. Folino & Arbach, 2021; J. Folino, 2015).

The preference for generic, rather than specific, tools was also observed in the simulation assessment. That is, the practitioners do not choose those instruments specifically designed for the task and the context. In the case of the assessment of harm, the results are somewhat more encouraging as a higher proportion of professionals indicated often using tools to assess post-traumatic stress disorder. However, even in this case, clinical (generic) scales are used more frequently than specific instruments. This contrasts with the recommendations of good psychological practices that have been generated for legal settings (Heilbrun, DeMatteo, et al., 2008).

Despite the common factors described in the frequency of instrument use, variations were observed according to region, which showed a similar pattern among the different areas of assessment. Projective techniques and the Rorschach were most frequently reported by professionals from Argentina, followed by South America. In contrast, professionals from Central America reported using psychometric tests more frequently. This suggests the influence of a psychodynamic perspective in the former (Klappenbach, 2015), and of evidence-based practice in the latter. This could be due to both historical reasons related to the training of psychologists in the different countries of the region, and geographical reasons, as the countries of northern Latin America showed assessment practices similar to those reported in previous surveys by professionals from North American and European countries (e.g., Archer et al., 2006; Lally, 2003; Neal & Grisso, 2014b).

Limitations and future lines

This study uses non-probabilistic sampling and, therefore, it is not possible to generalize its results beyond the study population (Eysenbach, 2004). Nevertheless, since this is the first survey in which professionals from so many countries in the region participated, and since its data are consistent with previous findings, our results may be useful in the generation of hypotheses whose contrast will allow us to improve the understanding of assessment practices in the region and to adapt them, as necessary, to current scientific knowledge.

At the same time, the study does not escape certain biases inherent to surveys conducted on the Internet. One of these is related to biases in the representativeness of the sample. By using lists of personal contacts, the majority of the sample are professionals geographically close to the authors. In fact, seven Latin American countries are not represented in this survey, and it would be advisable to include them in future studies to favor generalization from cross-national comparisons. The self-selection bias could also have influenced participation by increasing the representation of people with concerns about the topic. Conversely, the self-selective effect may have been counteracted by the participation of people who, although they did not strictly meet the inclusion criteria, still decided to respond to the survey. It is difficult to know how this may have impacted the results, and we believe this is an interesting topic for future exploration.

Conclusions

Codes of ethics and good practice guidelines serve to adapt professional discretion to the scientific and ethical standards that regulate the discipline. Such regulations become most important when the result of professional practice has the potential to influence decisions that affect the fundamental rights of individuals.

Given the evidence that mental health professionals working in legal settings, even the most expert, do not escape the biases inherent to human judgment (Neal & Grisso, 2014a; Zapf et al., 2018), internal training and external technical and deontological regulations are necessary to counteract these (Dror, 2016). These have already been defined for Anglo-Saxon contexts (T. M. S. Neal et al., 2019) and it is a challenge to define them for the Latin American region. The results of this survey represent a first step in this task and, for example, indicate the importance of disseminating knowledge about specific tools for legal settings in this region, but especially in the southern countries. This should occur in conjunction with other conditions, including: a) the generation of accredited training instances, b) the improvement of accessibility to the instruments by adapting their cost to economies that are very disadvantaged in relation to those in which they were developed and published, c) the promotion of research on their psychometric properties in local populations and, finally, d) investment by each country in strategies for transferring the resulting knowledge from research groups to the justice administrations. With respect to the latter, it is essential to promote work practices that minimize predictive error, and that take into account procedural and judicial guarantees, as well as the fundamental rights of individuals.

References

- Ægisdóttir, S., White, M. J., Spengler, P. M., Maugherman, A. S., Anderson, L. A., Cook, R. S., Nichols, C. N., Lampropoulos, G. K., & Walker, B. S. (2006). The meta-analysis of clinical judgment project: Fifty-six years of accumulated research on clinical versus statistical prediction. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 34(3), 341-382. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000005285875>
- American Psychological Association. (2013). Specialty guidelines for forensic psychology. *American Psychologist*, 68(1), 7-19. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029889>
- Andrés Pueyo, A., & Arbach, K. (2014). Peligrosidad y valoración del riesgo de violencia en contextos forenses. In E. García-López (Ed.), *Psicopatología Forense: Comportamiento Humano y Tribunales de Justicia* (pp. 505-525). Manual Moderno.
- Asociación de Psicólogos Forenses de la Administración de Justicia. (2018). *Evaluación Psicológica Forense de los abusos y maltratos a niños, niñas y adolescentes. Guía de buenas prácticas*. <https://copmelilla.org/descargas/pdf/guiebuenaspracticasyamaltratoinfantil.pdf>
- Australian Psychological Society. (2014). *Ethical guidelines for psychological practice in forensic contexts*. <http://afccnet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Handout-5-Ethical-guideline-forensic.pdf>
- Arbach, K., Bondaruk, A., Carubelli, S., Palma, F., & Singh, J. P. (2017). Evaluación forense de la peligrosidad: Una aproximación a las prácticas profesionales en Latinoamérica. *Psiencia: Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencia Psicológica*, 9(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.5872/psiencia/9.1.23>
- Arbach, K., & Folino, J. (2021). La valoración del riesgo de reincidencia en imputados por violencia contra la pareja: Un estudio longitudinal con la Guía SARA. *Anuario de Psicología Jurídica*, 31, 35-44. <https://doi.org/10.5093/apj2021a4>

- Archer, R. P., Buffington-Vollum, J. K., Stredny, R. V., & Handel, R. W. (2006). A Survey of Psychological Test Use Patterns Among Forensic Psychologists. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 87(1), 84-94. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa8701_07
- Arellano, L. A., & Rivera Heredia, M. E. (2021). Dilemas éticos en la práctica psicológica forense: Revisión sistemática y análisis bibliométrico. *Psicumex*, 11, 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.36793/psicumex.v11i2.380>
- Barboni, L., & Bonilla, N. (2019). Instrumentos de evaluación psicológica en el ámbito jurídico: una aproximación a las prácticas profesionales en Uruguay. *Revista Criminalidad*, 61(2), 133-144.
- Barboni, L., & Bonilla, N. (2022). *Estudio de mercado de ofertas de postgrado en Psicología Jurídica y Forense en Latinoamérica*. Universidad Católica de Uruguay.
- Benito, E. (2009). La formación en Psicología: revisión y perspectivas. *PSIENCIA. Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencia Psicológica*, 1(2), 3-10.
- Bhattacharjee, A. (2012). Social science research: Principles, methods, and practices. En *Textbooks Collection*. University of South Florida.
- Bonventre, C. L. (2021). Wrongful convictions and forensic science. *WIREs Forensic Science*, 3(4). <https://doi.org/10.1002/wfs2.1406>
- Borum, R., & Grisso, T. (1995). Psychological test use in criminal forensic evaluations. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 26(5), 465-473. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.26.5.465>
- Combalbert, N., Andronikof, A., Armand, M., Robin, C., & Bazex, H. (2014). Forensic mental health assessment in France: Recommendations for quality improvement. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 37(6), 628-634. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlp.2014.02.037>
- Colegio Oficial de Psicólogos de Catalunya. (2016). *Guía de buenas prácticas para la evaluación psicológica forense y la práctica pericial*. https://arxiu.copc.cat/adjuntos/adjunto_68/v/GuiaBonesPractiquesForenses.pdf?tm=1494424276
- Daubert vs. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (1993). 509 U.S. 579, 113 S. Ct. 2786, 125 L. Ed. 2d 469.
- Dror, I. E. (2016). A hierarchy of expert performance. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2016.03.001>
- Dror, I. E., & Murrie, D. C. (2018). A hierarchy of expert performance applied to forensic psychological assessments. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 24(1), 11-23. <https://doi.org/10.1037/law0000140>
- Duce, M. (2018a). Prueba pericial y su impacto en los errores del sistema de justicia penal: antecedentes comparados y locales para iniciar el debate. *Ius et Praxis*, 24(2), 223-262.
- Duce, M. (2018b). Una aproximación empírica al uso y prácticas de la prueba pericial en el proceso penal Chileno a la luz de su impacto en los errores del sistema. *Política Criminal*, 13(25), 42-103.
- Echeburúa, E., Muñoz, J. M., & Loinaz, I. (2011). La evaluación psicológica forense frente a la evaluación clínica: Propuestas y retos de futuro. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 11(1), 141-159.
- Eysenbach, G. (2004). Improving the quality of web surveys: The Checklist for Reporting Results of Internet E-Surveys (CHERRIES). *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 6(3), e34. <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.6.3.e34>
- Fariña, F., Arce, R., & Seijo, D. (2005). Historia de la Psicología Jurídica en América y Europa. In R. Arce, F. Fariña, & M. Novo (Eds.), *Psicología Jurídica*. Consellería de Xustiza, Interior e Administración Local.
- Folino, E., & Arbach, K. (2021). Valoración del riesgo de violencia en pacientes forenses con el HCR-20V3: Análisis de fiabilidad interevaluador y validez concurrente. *Vertex Revista Argentina de Psiquiatría*, 32(151), 32-44. <https://doi.org/10.53680/vertex.v32i151.23>
- Folino, J. (2015). Predictive efficacy of violence risk assessment instruments in Latin-America. *The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context*, 7(2), 51-58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpal.2014.11.006>
- Frye vs. U.S. (1923). 293 F. 1013. (D.C. Cir. 1923).
- Garrett, B. L., & Neufeld, P. J. (2009). Invalid forensic science testimony and wrongful convictions. *Virginia Law Review*, 95(1), 1-97.

- Garrido Gaitán, E., Lovelle Iglesias, M. I., Mora Montserrat, S., & Pina Ríos, R. (2023). *Guía ética y de buenas prácticas en Psicología Forense aplicada al ámbito penal*. Col·legi Oficial de Psicologia de Catalunya.
- Goldstein, N. E. S., Houck, M. J., & Folino, J. (2015). Tópicos actuales de la investigación internacional sobre riesgo de violencia. *Revista Criminalidad*, 57(1), 27-43.
- Greenberg, S. A., & Shuman, D. W. (1997). Irreconcilable conflict between therapeutic and forensic roles. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 28, 50-57. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.28.1.50>
- Grisso, T. (2010). Guidance for improving forensic reports: A review of common errors. *Open Access Journal of Forensic Psychology*, 2, 102-115.
- Hare, R. (2003). *The Hare Psychopathy Checklist - Revised Manual* (2nd ed.). Multi-Health Systems, Inc.
- Hathaway, S. R. (1982). *Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory*. University of Minnesota.
- Heilbrun, K. (1992). The role of psychological testing in forensic assessment. *Law and Human Behavior*, 16(3), 257-272. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01044769>
- Heilbrun, K., DeMatteo, D., Marczyk, G., & Goldstein, A. M. (2008). Standards of practice and care in forensic mental health assessment: Legal, Professional, and Principles-Based Considerations. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 14(1), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8971.14.1.1>
- Heilbrun, K., Grisso, T., & Goldstein, A. (2008). *Foundations of forensic mental health assessment*. Oxford University Press.
- Hill, D., & Demetriooff, S. (2019). Clinical-forensic psychology in Canada: A survey of practitioner characteristics, attitudes, and psychological assessment practices. *Canadian Psychology / Psychologie canadienne*, 60(1), 55-63. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cap0000152>
- Instituto de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses. (2016). *Guía de evaluación psicológica forense en casos de violencia contra las mujeres y los integrantes del grupo familiar, y en otros casos de violencia*. Ministerio Público. Fiscalía de la Nación. Lima, Perú. https://img.legis.pe/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/«Guía-de-Evaluación-Psicológica-Forense-en-caso-de-violencia-contra-las-mujeres-y-los-integrantes-del-grupo-familiar-y-en-otros-casos-de-violencia»-Legis.pe_.pdf
- Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses. (2010). *Guía para la realización de pericias psiquiátricas y psicológicas forenses mediante autopsia psicológica en la determinación de la manera de muerte (suicida, homicida o accidental)*. www.medicinalegal.gov.co/%0Adocuments/20143/40473/Guía+para+la+rea%0Alización+de+pericias+psiquiátricas%0A+o+psicológicas+forenses+mediante+autops%0Aia+psicológica+e+n+la+determinació%0An+de+la+manera+de+muerte+suicida%2C+homida+.%0Apdf/3e166326-5933-7734-
- Ireland, J. (2012). *Evaluating expert witness psychological reports: Exploring quality. Summary report (February)*. University of Central Lancashire. www.ccats.org.uk/images/Expert%2520Witness.pdf
- Juárez, J. R., & Lira Mendiguren, G. (2020). Buenas prácticas, tensiones y desafíos ético-deontológicos en la evaluación psicológica forense del maltrato y abuso sexual infantil. *Revista de Bioética y Derecho: Perspectivas Bioéticas*, 49, 41-58.
- Klappenbach, H. (2015). La formación universitaria en psicología en Argentina: Perspectivas actuales y desafíos a la luz de la historia. *Universitas Psychologica*, 14(3), 937-960. <https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.upsy14-3.fupa>
- Lally, S. J. (2003). What tests are acceptable for use in forensic evaluations? A survey of experts. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 34(5), 491-498. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.34.5.491>
- Montero, I., & León, O. O. G. (2007). A guide for naming research studies in Psychology. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 7, 847-862.
- Morey, L. C. (1991). *Personality Assessment Inventory: Professional manual*. Psychological Assessment Resources.
- Muñoz Vicente, J. M., & López Ossorio, J. J. (2016). Valoración psicológica del riesgo de violencia: Alcance y limitaciones para su uso en el contexto forense. *Anuario de Psicología Jurídica*, 26(1), 130-140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apj.2016.04.005>

- National Research Council. (2009). *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*. The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/12589>
- Navarro, J., & Gudjonsson, G. H. (2008). Chilean psychologists as expert witnesses: The challenges of a new criminal justice system. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology*, 19(2), 249-260. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14789940701692324>
- Neal, T., & Grisso, T. (2014a). Assessment practices and expert judgment methods in forensic psychology and psychiatry: An international snapshot. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 41(12), 1406-1421. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854814548449>
- Neal, T., & Grisso, T. (2014b). The cognitive underpinnings of bias in forensic mental health evaluations. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 20(2), 200-211. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035824>
- Neal, T. M. S., Slobogin, C., Saks, M. J., Faigman, D. L., & Geisinger, K. F. (2019). Psychological assessments in legal contexts: Are courts keeping “junk science” out of the courtroom? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 20(3), 135-164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100619888860>
- Neal, T., Martire, K. A., Johan, J. L., Mathers, E. M., & Otto, R. K. (2022). The law meets psychological expertise: Eight best practices to improve forensic psychological assessment. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 18, 169-192.
- Otto, R. K., DeMier, R., & Boccaccini, M. T. (2014). *Forensic reports and testimony: A guide to effective communication for psychologists and psychiatrists*. Wiley.
- Paulhus, D. (1998). *Paulhus Deception Scales (PDS): The Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding-7: User's Manual*. Multi-Health Systems, Inc.
- President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. (2016). *Forensic Science in Criminal Courts: Ensuring Scientific Validity of Feature-Comparison Methods*. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/PCAST/pcast_forensic_science_report_final.pdf
- Quijada, D. (2011). *Aportes al debido proceso penal en evaluación pericial psicológica y psiquiátrica a imputados en delitos sexuales: ¿Existe relación de coherencia entre solicitud y respuesta pericial?* [Trabajo de maestría, Universidad Diego Portales]. https://cejamericas.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/DQUIJADA_existerelaciondecoherenciaentresolicitudyrespuestapericial.pdf
- Quinsey, V. L., Harris, G. T., Rice, M. E. M. E., Cormier, C. A., Quinsey, V. L., & Cormier, C. A. (2006). *Violent offenders: Appraising and managing risk* (3rd ed.). American Psychological Association.
- Quintero, L. M., García-López, E., & Mercurio, E. (2020). Training in Legal and Forensic Psychology in Hispan-America. In J. Rich, A. Padilla López, L. Ebersöhn, J. Taylor, & S. Morrissey (Eds.), *Teaching Psychology around the World: Volume 5* (pp. 19-33). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Sánchez Fernández, J., Muñoz Leiva, F., & Montoro Ríos, F. (2009). ¿Cómo mejorar la tasa de respuesta en encuestas on line? *Revista de Estudios Empresariales. Segunda Época*, 1, 45-62.
- Singh, J. P., Condemarín, C., & Folino, J. (2013). El uso de instrumentos de riesgo de violencia en Argentina y Chile. *Revista Criminalidad*, 55(3), 279-290.
- Singh, J. P., Desmarais, S. L., Hurducas, C., Arbach, K., Condemarín, C., Dean, K., Doyle, M., Folino, J. O., Godoy-Cervera, V., Grann, M., Ho, R. M. Y., Large, M. M., Nielsen, L. H., Pham, T. H., Rebocho, M. F., Reeves, K. a., Rettenberger, M., de Ruiter, C., Seewald, K., & Otto, R. K. (2014). International Perspectives on the Practical Application of Violence Risk Assessment: A Global Survey of 44 Countries. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 13(3), 193-206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14999013.2014.922141>
- Tombaugh, T. (1996). *Test of Memory Malingering (TOMM)*. Multi-Health Systems.
- Webster, C. D., Douglas, K. S., Eaves, D., & Hart, S. D. (1997). *HCR-20: Assessing risk for violence, version 2*. Mental Health, Law, and Policy Institute, Simon Fraser University.
- Wechsler, D. (1981). *WAIS-R: Wechsler adult intelligence scale-revised*. Psychological Corporation.
- Younan, M., & Martire, K. A. (2021). Likeability and expert persuasion: Dislikeability reduces the perceived persuasiveness of expert evidence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12(December), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.785677>
- Young, G. (2016). Psychiatric/ psychological forensic report writing. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 49, 214-220. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlp.2016.10.008>

Zapf, P. A., Kukucka, J., Kassin, S. M., & Dror, I. E. (2018). Cognitive bias in forensic mental health assessment: Evaluator beliefs about its nature and scope. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 24(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1037/law0000153>

Authors' contribution (CRediT Taxonomy): 1. Conceptualization; 2. Data curation; 3. Formal Analysis; 4. Funding acquisition; 5. Investigation; 6. Methodology; 7. Project administration; 8. Resources; 9. Software; 10. Supervision; 11. Validation; 12. Visualization; 13. Writing: original draft; 14. Writing: review & editing. K. A. has contributed in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14; L. B. in 1, 5, 8, 13, 14; E. M. in 1, 5, 8, 13, 14

Editora científica responsable: Dra. Cecilia Cracco.