

## Fptsd Scale

Traditional Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2) “fake bad” scales perform much better in detecting malingered mental health problems such as depression and psychosis than posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Rogers, Sewell, Martin, & Vitacco, 2003). As a consequence, the MMPI-2’s Fptsd scale was developed to more optimally detect malingered PTSD.

The MMPI-2 Fptsd Scale was developed and validated on a sample of combat veterans evaluated for PTSD (Elhai et al., 2002). A follow-up study (Elhai et al., 2004) with civilian trauma victims showed promising utility in malingered PTSD detection for Fptsd, but not as promising as that found in the initial study – possibly due to the difference in populations (military vs. civilian trauma).

Additional studies have assessed the MMPI-2’s Fptsd scale performance in detecting malingered PTSD, and have shown modest success for Fptsd for detecting malingered PTSD. Arbisi and colleagues found some support for Fptsd in discriminating between veterans assessed for PTSD using standard instructions vs. instructions to simulate PTSD (Arbisi, Ben-Porath, & McNulty, 2006). However, Marshall and Bagby found less promising results for Fptsd when assessing its incremental validity over other MMPI-2 fake bad scales in discriminating between participants instructed to feign PTSD from civilian trauma victim claimants with PTSD (Marshall & Bagby, 2006). A meta-analysis examined the MMPI-2 Fptsd’s performance across studies (Gancedo et al., 2021).

Elhai and colleagues’ initial study on Fptsd provides an appendix with the items necessary for scoring Fptsd (Elhai et al., 2002). A point is assigned for answering “true” to each true-keyed item, as well as for answering “false” to each false-keyed item. A conversion table for transforming total raw scores to T scores is provided there as well. Arbisi and colleagues list diagnostic test performance estimates for an Fptsd T score of 85 (Arbisi et al., 2006).

The MMPI-2 Fptsd Scale has not been updated for the newer MMPI-RF or MMPI-3.

## References

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The original Elhai et al. (2002) paper, describing the scale’s development, can be downloaded from: <https://www.jon-elhai.com/research#access>