

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

Social Security Disability and Clinical Neuropsychological Assessment

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the guidelines for Social Security disability evaluation of mental impairments in general and organic syndromes in particular. The listings of diagnostic categories for application and procedures for evaluation are outlined. The qualifications and roles of the clinical neuropsychologist are discussed. In addition, the special problem of malingering is considered.

According to recent figures (Bowe, 1980), approximately 15% of the population of the United States, or over 35 million people, have some type of physical or mental disability. While a significant percentage of children have disabilities (10%; Asch, 1984), most disabled individuals tend to be adults. The incidence of specific work disability increases with age (3% between 16 and 25 years to 24% between 55 and 64 years; US Bureau of the Census, 1983). Low income, limited education, and minority racial status also appear to be associated with more frequent work disability (US Bureau of the Census, 1983).

Since most disabled individuals are unable to be employed, other financial support is often sought. *Worker's (or workmen's) compensation* is one source of support covering work-related disabilities. This type of support has a ceiling of payments limiting the financial resources available to the disabled individual. Worker's compensation rules and support payments vary by state and are often supplemented by other nonoccupational disability insurance which covers injuries and/or illnesses. For this additional insurance, the injury may be either work- or non-work-related.

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