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## Discussion

*In the previous issue, we published Jan Widacki's article entitled "What Do Polygraphers-Practitioners Expect from Science?" that, with encouragement from the editors, opened a discussion. Below, we publish Frank Horvat's voice in that discussion.*

I am responding to the survey questions regarding the need for research on and in Polygraphy (see: „What Do Polygraphers–Practitioners Expect from Science?“). I will respond to each of your questions but I find it necessary to expand somewhat on this important topic. I've had a number of discussions on the topic in recent days with other examiners, including APA Board members, and find that my views seem to be somewhat divergent from theirs but in line with what seems to be your position. I'll try to keep my comments brief but will agree to write more in the event you find them of interest.

1. Do you believe that practical polygraphy needs cooperation with research and university centres?

YES  / NO

I believe this is essential if we are to advance Polygraphy beyond its current state. What examiners alone are now doing is entirely inadequate. We need much more interest and innovation—and research—than is now evident.

2. Have currently conducted research, and its published results, been useful for your practice?

YES Xo / NO o But not just for my practice but for many others and, perhaps, for almost all practicing examiners and others with an interest in the field.

In response to question #3: I strongly favor more and better interaction between examiners, the APA and similar organizations, and university professors and researchers. As you know a number of years ago the APA provided support to my university, MSU, to arrange for the establishment of a Research Center devoted to research on topics related to Polygraphy. I directed that Center and used APA financial support to provide assistantships to graduate—and some undergraduate—students to carry out or assist in research projects. A number of projects were completed in the years the Center was active and most of them were published in either the APA publications or scientific journals. In my view the Center and the way it functioned was quite successful in spite of the fact that it had very limited financial support. But there was good support from principal persons at MSU and that was essential to its functioning. When I left the university for work at NCCA I was interested in maintaining the Center, at least the idea of it, by moving it to South Carolina. I had hoped to do this with a professor who had a strong background in fMRI and related technologies—and also an interest in Polygraphy. But, the APA decided not to proceed and withdrew from funding a Research Center. (I believe that there were some on the APA Board who were not interested in research and others who believed that what was already done was all that was necessary.) The APA funding, by the way, relative to typical research grants, was very, very small and not especially of great interest without strong support from one who would direct a Center. As a point of information my interest was in recruiting persons who were already trained and experienced examiners to do research. First, therefore, it was necessary to encourage such persons to apply for admission to a graduate program; that, in itself, was a challenge. This is not something that typically has been done at other universities where research in Polygraphy has been carried out.

I have served on the APA's Yankee Scholarship committee a number of years. When we meet to select a recipient I have always encouraged the selection of someone who seemed likely not only to be a good examiner but who also showed promise to do more, perhaps in the research area or in other ways that would advance the field.

In a recent meeting I had with some Board members we discussed how we might get the APA more involved in research. At that time I indicated my view that the APA could not afford to fund research as it is typically thought of; that is, where a grantor provides sufficient funding to support professors and students to complete a project

on a given topic. (As you know, \$100,000 to do that would be a small amount of funding. The APA could not afford to do this, at least not regularly, if at all.) But, as I indicated above and in this meeting the APA could afford to support graduate students to do thesis (Masters degree) or dissertation (Doctoral degree) research with support from interested university professors. Such students now do a great deal of research guided by professors. The APA must, however, identify professors at research universities and work with them to engage graduate students in projects of their choice but also of interest to the APA. This is not being done.

I didn't get a very positive response from those at this meeting and, unfortunately, I believe that might be the response from the entire Board and maybe even the membership. The primary reason for this is that most, if not all, Board members have no academic working — background or experience. In addition, and in my view, the polygraph examiner community has deliberately isolated itself from the academic world. Maybe this is because academics generally are not favourable to polygraph testing and most of them, if they have an interest at all, hold negative views, e.g., Lykken, Ben Shakhar, etc.. This suggests to me that we need to find ways to overcome this problem. That can't be done without some hard work and, likely, some disappointments. As I see it examiners, including some serving on the Board, don't understand that much of what they write about and publish for their 'community' is of little or no interest to the broader 'scientific' community.

All of that said let me turn to question #3. As I see it then, the most important step that can be taken is not to identify the particular focus of research that needs to be done. Rather, it is to gain involvement from those at universities to do research of interest to polygraphists. If that is initiated we'd find, I'm sure, that professors and students would choose to do research in areas or on problems that are of interest to them; asking such persons to do research that is of no interest to them but is of interest to us simply wouldn't work.

So, turning to your list of topics I'd choose to do first, research that shows us how to differentiate cleanly, if possible, between 'screening' procedures versus those that are devoted to known events. Polygraph testing does not work the same way in both circumstances and it's necessary to deal with this issue. I don't see this on your list. And, unfortunately, it is seldom the case that even examiners note the distinction between the two approaches.

Second, we are now at the point where computerized polygraph instruments allow us to do things with the data we collect that is otherwise not possible. That is not to say, by the way, that at this time I'd advocate the use of "computer scoring" for decision-making. I do think it ought to be used by all examiners as an assist in deci-

sion-making. But I'd certainly like to see research on other advances that are possible with computerized polygraph instruments. I'm confident we can make changes here that would be very positive ones. But, again, I need to point out that I am not referring only to the development of or improvements in scoring algorithms.

Finally, another 'problem' not listed by you but which I see is a very important one and one which doesn't get a lot of attention in the literature is what is the examiners' 'skill' in the conduct of an examination and how is this reflected, if it is, in the polygraphic data. It seems to me that much of what examiners write about — and seem to believe—is that differences between examiners are less important than the 'technique' that is used. By technique many examiners—and the APA—usually mean 'format' without considering the difference. My research shows that 'format' does not account for differences of significance. There are many, usually unmentioned, issues of greater importance; examiner differences being one of them.

Frank Horvath, Ph. D.