Assessing Avoidant Personality Disorder Using the Five-Factor Model

New scales were developed to assess avoidant personality disorder (AVD) based on basic personality trait elements from the Five-Factor Model (FFM). The specific FFM traits most critical to the disorder were identified by referring to expert ratings, translations of the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria, and a meta-analytic review. Items were written to assess extreme, maladaptive manifestations of the traits as they relate to AVPD. Participants were 315 undergraduates who completed the NEO PI-R, SCID-II, PDQ-IV, Social Phobia Scale, Social Interaction Anxiety Scale, and the newly developed Elements of Avoidant Personality scale (EAP). Each final EAP scale was examined for internal consistency and unidimensionality. The EAP scales were also compared to the original FFM scales from which they were derived (NEO PI-R) in terms of convergent/divergent correlations and incremental validity in the prediction of existing AVD measures. Our new AVD scale provides an assessment based on elemental personality traits rather than pre-existing scales that blend these elements.