Investigation of Clinical Efficacy in the Semi-Decorticat

John P. Hatch, Johnnie G. Fisher, and John D. Rugh (Eds.)
Biofeedback: Studies in Clinical Efficacy

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The topics are salient and the authors are illustrous figures in Biofeedback: Studies in Clinical Efficacy edited by Hatch, Fisher, and Rugh. The topics covered are tension and vascular headaches, hypertension, temporomandibular joint pain (TMJ), and bruxism, disorders of motor function, gastrointestinal disorders, chronic pain syndrome, and Raynaud’s Syndrome. The primary purpose of the book is to document the clinical efficacy of biofeedback with psychophysiological disorders. The authors were required to stress the strongest available scientific evidence rather than clinical lore, and each chapter was to cover clinical efficacy, specificity of effect, and mechanisms of action.

The required coverage of topics (clinical efficacy, mechanisms of action) provides the reader with handy information on critical topics. The scope of the reviews is vast and the level of physiological and methodological scholarship is generally high. There is an excellent chapter by Hatch on how to do clinical trials. This chapter acknowledges most of the previous criticisms by skilled and sophisticated clinicians. For example, statistical significance is only an index of reliability and not of the potency of treatment effects because treatment effects may vary vastly over different subsets of patients given the same treatment, training to criteria may be important, and so forth. This book contains several premature conclusions, including conclusions about therapist experience level and subject variables. Several of the authors demonstrate impressive but reckless courage in their willingness to draw conclusions about specificity of effect and mechanisms of action while skating on very thin empirical ice. Noticeably missing in the field of clinical biofeedback is a general psychophysiological model that specifies the conditions under which stress related symptoms (e.g., pain) emerge, persist, and remit. Kurt Lewin once said “There is nothing so practical as a good theory.” A good theory tells you what you should notice, what data to collect, and where to look for it. Without a theory there is no clear concept of what effects are specific as opposed to nonspecific (Grunbaum, 1985), what conditions for change are essential as opposed to sufficient, what variables (e.g., triggering and buffering) should be controlled in empirical studies, for example. A psychophysiological theory of the predisposers (high and low hypnotic ability, catastrophizing, negative affectivity and sympathetic reactivity), triggers (major life change and minor hassles), and buffers (support systems and coping skills) associated with the onset and remission of stress related disorders has been proposed (Wickramasekera, 1979, 1984, 1985). Without theoretical specification, individual differences on these independent variables are treated as error or noise in the experimental design. Empirical research should focus at least on pre-post measures of the underlying hypothesized mechanisms of change and not merely on symptoms. Although most of the disorders reviewed are psychophysiological, the

References
Tracing Women's Adolescent Identity Into Adulthood

Ruthellen Josselson
Finding Herself: Pathways to Identity Development in Women
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Ruthellen Josselson, associate professor of psychology at Towson State University and therapist in private practice in Baltimore, Maryland, contributed the chapter “Ego Development in Adolescence” to J. Adelson (Ed.) Handbook of Adolescent Psychology. © Ravenna Helson, research psychologist in the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research and adjunct professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, is coauthor, with T. Elliot and J. Leigh, of the chapter “Adolescent Personality and Women’s Work Patterns” in D. Stern and D. Eichorn (Eds.) Adolescence and Work: Influences of Social Structure, Labor Markets, and Culture.

For those of us who are interested in women’s personality development, this is a book to enjoy, study, use in class, and recommend to others.

In the early 1970s, Josselson studied 52 women in their senior year at one of four colleges. She assigned them to foreclosed, achieved, moratorium, and diffuse categories on the basis of the interview that Marcia (1966) had developed to assess individual differences in ego identity (Erikson, 1956) among late adolescents. Now Josselson shows what 34 of these women—8 to 10 in each category—were like in their mid-30s. Here is one of the few follow-up studies within this research paradigm.

In her description of processes of identity formation, Josselson draws on the work of object relations theorists and feminists who emphasize attachment as a neglected strand of development in general and as particularly important for women. To separate and individuate, she says, does not terminate relationship but requires revision of relationship, and “identity is always bound to one’s sense of connection to others” (p. 21).

Men are wont to define themselves by occupation or by their distinctiveness from others, which makes their identity easy to name. Women, by contrast, orient themselves in more complicated ways, balancing many involvements and aspirations, with connection to others paramount, their identities are thus compounded and more difficult to articulate. (p. 8)

A concept that Josselson uses to try to articulate women’s identity formation is that of “anchoring.” Women either remain attached to their primary family or try to pull up that anchor and become attached to new relationships, or sometimes to causes or career goals. A successful anchoring, as I understand it, makes for steady identity. Josselson’s sample consisted of ordinary college-educated women, not particularly introspective or individualistic. Boyfriends and husbands were usually most important in the formation of their young-adult identity. Careers were the anchor point for only a few women, despite the fact that they had advanced degrees and most worked. When a career was the anchor, she says, a mentor had taken a personal interest in the woman’s career and provided an opportunity for her to bond with the field in a personal way.

Josselson found that women with foreclosed or achieved identities in college had the same identity status in their mid-30s. However, those who had been unconcerned (diffuse) or in a state of indecision (moratorium) showed a variety of patterns that required some new nomenclature. The appraisal of adult identity in the study was a clinical one, based on answers from a questionnaire and an interview that are included in an appendix.

There is no validation for use of the Identity Status Interview with an adult sample, and as Josselson says, the criteria for categorizing the identity of individuals in adolescence become less meaningful as life goes on. Although Josselson’s clinical appraisals of identity constellations may be fallible, her case studies are not oversimplified; her analyses are instructive, her formulations about each pattern and subpattern are insightful, and her theoretical discussions are lucid, even in pointing out areas of obscurity.

References

