

Original Paper

## Administration of Rorschach test to patient and family member

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### Abstract

The Rorschach test was administered to a 24-year-old male who refused to work and also to his father. The results showed that the patient escape from a stressful situation and his father displayed a rational attitude. However, as denied his son's withdrawal, we suggested that he spoke to his son with a sympathetic attitude. Our findings suggest the value of administering the Rorschach psychological test to not only the patients but also their families.

**Key words** : Rorschach test, psychological test, job refusal, family therapy

### Introduction

Family therapy is one of the methods of psychotherapy in which therapists focus their attention upon family relationships. Sometimes an individual interview is effective for making patients aware of problems related to their family relationships. Imura (1990) applied the Rorschach test (Ro-test) to a married couple, and reported it to be useful for diagnosing the marital relationship. Although psychological tests are used to shed light on individual personalities and behaviors, they could also be powerful tools for assessing interactional patterns and relationships. However, there have been very few studies using psychological tests for patients' families. In the present study, we analyzed the results of the Ro-test given to a patient with job refusal and his father, and discuss the father-child relationship.

### Methods

#### (1) Rorschach test

The Rorschach inkblot test is a psychological projective test of personality. We used a Ro-test modified by Takahashi et al. (1994) based on the comprehensive system\* of Exner

(1993). According to the Ro-test by Takahashi (1989), a stain of ink is given as a stimulus, and the patients' responses are used to understand their life experiences, feelings, desires, conflicts, and personality.

#### (2) Case studied

A 24-year-old male who refused to work was dependent on his father. The patient's father decided on the patient's high school, university, and firm of employment. Thus, the relationship between the patient and his father was considered to be the main factor of the withdrawal of the patient. We administered three psychological tests (Ro-test, Drawing test, Word association test) to the patient at the time of the first interview. We gave the same tests to his father two months later. The tests were done after obtaining their informed consent, with special consideration to protect the patient's privacy. The patient then received psychotherapy for two years (33 interviews) and was finally employed by a computer firm.

### Outline of the case

This 24-year-old male diagnosed with "withdrawal neurosis" was introduced to the present author by a psychiatrist for psychological testing and psychotherapy. The patient was the oldest of three children. One of his younger sisters was in her second year of college, and the other was in her first year at high school.

\* comprehensive system : an integration of empirically demonstrable wisdom that marked the growth of the test from the time of Rorschach's monograph in 1921 to the most current thinking and research

His family had no psychiatric history. His developmental history did not show any specific mental and health problems. His father was an elite salaried worker and told his son who was unemployed to work at once: "It is our duty to work by the Constitution of Japan, as you also know." At home, there was almost no communication between the patient and his father. His mother was a very gentle housewife. The patient said that she talked a lot with the patient and that he felt closer to his mother than to his father. The patient had been employed by a well-known firm after graduating from a state university, and had worked for one year and ten months. His father was told by the patient's senior that he was excellent when he first started his work. He lived alone in an apartment near the firm. However, he was not able to complete a job-related report and was absent from the firm 3 times without permission. His father, living in Osaka, consulted with his son's boss in Tokyo about the matter, and the patient left the firm.

For the next several months, the patient isolated himself from his family by staying in his room, watching TV or reading books except the meal time. Since he did not find a new job, and only stayed at home, his father recommended that he consulted a doctor.

At the first interview, he was somewhat rigid, guarded and picked his words carefully

without looking at the therapist. According to him, his father said to him "Work!" twice a week. Although the patient could understand his father's reasoning, he could not find a job. He expressed his feelings as follows. "My heart seems like a kite with a broken string." He had experienced withdrawal for six months when he was a university student, since he was not able to complete his studies for graduation. His father repeatedly encouraged him, visiting the university dormitory where the patient lived alone, and he finally finished writing his graduation thesis.

**Results of the Ro-test**

Table 1 shows the responses of the Ro-test for the patient and Table 2 shows that for his father. Table 3 shows the main index of Ro-test for the patient and his father. The symbols and criteria for the coding of the Rorschach responses given in the Appendix.

The patient tended to set high targets beyond his ability (high W : M ratio). His mental strain was also high (Ex : 2). He was not good at common sense thinking (low Popular responses). Moreover, he was not able to control his feelings appropriately (low X+%). He acted according to his desire (high Xu%). He tended to avoid coping with stimuli emotionally (low Afr). It thus seems that he was

Table 1 Responses of the patient's Ro-test

Card	Response and scoring	Card	Response and scoring
I	1. An insect Wo1 Fo A 1.0	11.	Lake Wo1 Fru Na,Bt 2.0
	2. A dog Wo1 Fo Ad 1.0	V	12. A bat Wo1 Fo A P 1.0
II	3. Two people facing each other W+1 Mao (2) H P 4.5		13. A moth Wo1 Fo A 1.0 PSV
	4. Red socks D+2 FCu (2) Cg 5.5		14. Explosion Ddv/+99 ma.YF- Ex
	5. Volcanic explosion Dv3 ma.CFo Ex	VI	15. A fox Do3 Fo Ad
III	6. A mantis Ddo40 Fo A	VII	16. Two elephants W+1 FMau (2) A 2.5
	7. A bow tie Do3 Fo Cg		17. Two people W+1 Mpo (2) H 2.5
	8. A doll Wo1 Fu (H) 5.5	VIII	18. Dogs W+1 FMp.CFo (2) A, Ls P 4.5
	9. Bloodstain Do2 CFu (2) Bl	IX	Rejection
IV	10. A wild boar WSol Fo Ad 5.0	X	19. A cobweb Do1 Fu Id
			20. Tempura Do9 Fu Fd

Table 2 Responses of the father's Ro-test

Card	Response and scoring	Card	Response and scoring
I 1.	A bat Wol FMao A P 1.0	16.	A butterfly Wol FMao A P 1.0
2.	X-rays of a pelvis Wol Fo Xy 1.0	VI 17.	A dried food of a fish Wol Fo Fd 2.5
3.	A black butterfly is flying. Wol FMa.FC'o A C 1.0	VII 18.	Two children are flying up. W+1 Mao (2) H,Cg,Id 2.5
II 4.	A crab Wol Fo A 4.5	19.	There is a pond in the middle and stones in both sides. Wv/+1 Fu Na 4.0
5.	A puddle DSv6 Fo Na	20.	Two big pigs Dd+99 FMau (2) A 1.0
6.	It seems to me that lava is blowing out. Dv3 ma.CFo Fi	VIII 21.	Two wild boars Do1 FMpo (2) A P
7.	Two animals are putting the mouth together. D+6 FMao (2) A P 5.5	22.	A flower is withering. Wol FCo Bt 4.5 MOR
8.	Two deer D+2 FMa- (2) A 5.5	23.	A devil Do7 Mpu (H)
III 9.	Two women are dancing. D+1 Mao (2) H, Id P 3.0	IX 24.	Two hippopotamuses DSol mp- (2) Ad MOR
10.	A beetle Do1 Fo A	25.	A chandelier is hanging down. Do6 mp.FC- Art
IV 11.	An animal pelt Wol Fo Ad C 2.0	26.	A statue of Buddha Do8 Fu (H),Art
12.	Seaweed Wv1 mpo Bt	X 27.	Two big spiders Do1 Fo (2) A
13.	Many people are standing on a rocky mountain. W+1 Mpu H,Ls 4.0	28.	A crab Do9 FCu Fd DV
14.	A monkey W+1 FMpo A,Bt 2.0	29.	A crane is flying toward the ground. Do10 FMao A
15.	A goose W+1 FMao (2) A 2.5	30.	Two dead leaves are falling. Ddo33 mp.FCu (2) Bt MOR

Table 3 Main index of the Ro-test

Index	Patient	Father	Takahashi et al.
R	20	30	22.85
Lambda	1.22	0.43	0.96
W:M	5.50	3.50	3.76
P	3	5	5.61
X+%	60.0	66.6	73
F+%	72.7	77.8	69
Xu%	35.0	23.3	18
eb (left side)	3	13	4.79
Intellectualization Index	0	2	0.94
MOR	0	3	0.35
Afr	0.18	0.50	0.47
Isolation Index	0.20	0.30	0.15
FM	1	10	3.69
m	2	5	1.10
Ex	2	0	0.18

not able to adapt himself to society (F+% was high in relation to X+%).

Overall, the patient had little tolerance against stress and sometimes had considerable difficulty in expressing his feelings openly or directly. These findings may be related to his

withdrawal.

His father had difficulty in paying attention and concentrating (left-side value of the eb: 13, FM: 10). Under ordinary circumstances, his capacity to control himself and to tolerate stresses were not very different from that of most adults. He often displayed rational thinking (high intellectualization index). He might have negative self-image (high morbid content). He showed five m (inanimate movement), indicating that he was experiencing stress, as a result of his son's withdrawal.

#### Family therapy focused on the father-child relationship

During the several months prior to consultation, the patient had attempted to isolate himself from others, probably because he needed to avoid stress.

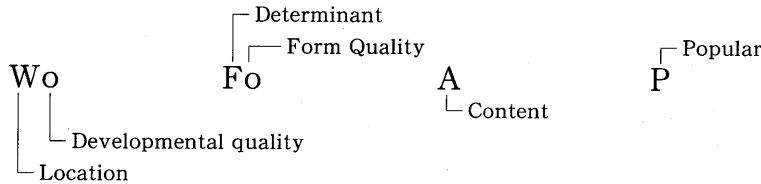
The result of Ro-test showed that his father had the tendency to deal with an emotional

question as an intellectual one. That is, he considered his son's question as though it were a business one. Since the father had denied his son's withdrawal, we proposed that the father to speak to his son with a sympathetic attitude. The advice for the patient, often reporting explaining the Ro-test results, was to feel him to try to solve his problems by himself.

In this study, we administered the Ro-test to this patient and his father and interpreted the test results as those that could be used for gaining better understanding of family relationships. Our findings suggest that it is very effective to use a psychological test not only for patients but also for their families.

**Appendix**

Scoring example



Symbols and criteria for coding the location

Symbol	Definition	Criterion
W	Whole responses	Where the entire blot used in the responses. All portions must be used.
D	Common detail responses	A frequently identified area of the blot
Dd	Unusual detail responses	An infrequently identified area of the blot
S	Space responses	A white space area is used in the responses (scored only with another location symbol, as in WS, DS, or DdS)

(Exner, 1993)

Symbols and criteria for coding the developmental quality

Symbol	Definition	Criterion
+	Synthesized responses	Unitary or discrete portions of the blot are articulated and combined into a single answer. Two or more objects are described as separate but related. At least one of the objects involved must have a specific form demand, or be described in a manner that creates a specific form demand.
v/+	Synthesized responses	Unitary or discrete portions of the blot are articulated and combined into a single answer. Two or more objects are described as separate but related. None of the objects involved have a specific form demand, or are articulated in a way to create a specific form demand.
o	Ordinary response	A discrete area of the blot is selected and articulated so as to emphasize the outline and structural features of the object. The object reported has a natural form demand or the description of the object is such to create a specific form demand.
v	Vague response	A diffuse or general impression is offered to the blot or the blot area in a manner that avoids the necessity of articulating specific form demand, and the articulation does not introduce a specific form demand for the object reported.

(Exner, 1993)

Symbols and criteria for determinant coding

Category	Symbol	Criterion
Form	F	Form answers. To be used separately for responses based exclusively on form feature of the blot, or in combination with other determinant symbols (except M & m) when the form features have contributed to the formulation of the answer.
Movement	M	Human movement response. To be used for responses involving the kinesthetic activity of a human, or of an animal or fictional character in humanlike activity.
	FM	Animal movement response. To be used for responses involving a kinesthetic activity of an animal. The movement perceived must be congruent to the species identified in the content. Animals reported in movement not common to their species should be coded as M.
	m	Inanimate movement response. To be used for responses involving the movement of inanimate, inorganic, or insensate objects.
Chromatic color	CF	Color-form response. To be used for answer that are formulated primarily because of the chromatic color features of the blot. Form features are used, but are not of secondary importance.
	FC	Form-color response. To be used for answers that are created mainly because of form features. Chromatic color is also used, but is of secondary importance.
Achromatic color	FC'	Form-achromatic color response. To be used for answers that are based mainly on the features. The achromatic features, clearly used as color, are also included, but are of secondary importance.
Shading-Diffuse	YF	Shading-form response. To be used for responses based primary on the light-dark features of the blot. Form features are included, but are of secondary importance.
Pair & Reflection	(2)	The pair responses. To be used for answers in which two identical objects are reported, based on the symmetry of the blot. The objects must be equivalent in all respects, but must not be identified as being reflected or as mirror images.
	Fr	Form-reflection response. To be used for answers in which the blot or blot area is identified as reflected or a mirror image, based on the symmetry of the blot. The substance of the response is based on form features, and the object reported has a specific form demand.

(Exner, 1993)

Symbols and criteria for coding form quality

Symbol	Definition	Criterion
+	Superior overelaborated	The usually precise articulation of the use of a manner that tends to enrich the quality of the response without sacrificing the appropriateness of the form use. The + answer need not be original, but rather unique by the manner in which details are defined and by which the form is used and specified.
o	Ordinary	The obvious, easily articulated use of form features to define an object reported frequently by others. The answer is commonplace and easy to see. There is no unusual enrichment of the answer by overelaboration of the form features.
u	Unusual	A low-frequency response in which the basic contours involved are not significantly violated. These are uncommon answers that are seen quickly and easily by the observer.
-	Minus	The distorted, arbitrary, unrealistic use of form in creating a response. The answer is imposed on the blot structure with total, or near total disregard for the structure of the area being used in creating the response. Often arbitrary contours will be created where none exist.

(Exner, 1993)

Symbols and criteria for coding the content

Category	Symbol	Criterion
Whole Human	H	Involving the percept of a whole human form.
Whole Human (fictional or mythological)	(H)	Involving the percept of a whole human form that is fictional or mythological, such as clowns, fairies, giants, witches, fairy tale characters, ghosts, dwarfs, devils, angels, science fiction creatures that are humanoid, human-like monsters.
Whole Animal	A	Involving the percept of a whole animal form.
Animal Detail	Ad	Involving the percept of an incomplete animal form, such as the hoof of a horse, claw of a lobster, head of a dog, animal skin.
Art	Art	Involving percepts of paintings, drawings, or illustrations.
Blood	Bl	Involving the percept of blood, either human or animal.
Botany	Bt	Involving the percept of any plant life such as bushes, flowers, seaweed, trees, or parts of plant life, such as leaves, petals, tree trunk, root.
Clothing	Cg	Involving the percept of any article of clothing such as, hat, boots, belt, necktie, jacket, trousers, scarf.
Explosion	Ex	Involving percepts of a blast or explosion, including fireworks.
Fire	Fi	Involving percepts of fire or smoke.
Food	Fd	Involving the percept of any edible, such as fried chicken, ice cream, fried shrimp, vegetables, steak.
Landscape	Ls	Involving percepts of landscape, such as mountain, hill, island, cave, rocks, desert.
Nature	Na	Used for a broad variety of contents from the natural environment that are not coded as Bt or Ls, such as sun, moon, sky, water, river, ice, snow, rain, night.
X-ray	Xy	Used specifically for the content of x-ray and may include either skeletal or organs.
Idiographic contents	Id	Some responses will include contents that do not fit easily into one of the standard content categories.

(Exner, 1993)

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Index in the Ro-test

Index	
R	This is the number of responses.
Lambda	This is a ratio that compares the frequency of pure F responses with all other answers in the record. It relates to issues of economizing the use of resources. It is calculated as : $L = \frac{F \text{ (Number of Responses having only Pure F determinants)}}{R-F \text{ (Total R minus Pure Form answers)}}$
W : M (Aspirational Ratio)	This relationship usually is not reduced to a ratio, but instead entered as indicated with the total number of W responses on the left the total number of M answer at the right.
P (Popular Responses)	The popular responses is regarded as reflecting the ability to perceive and respond to the commonplace features of the blots.
X+% (Conventional Form)	This variable concerns the extent to which form use is conventional. It is calculated as : $X+\% = \frac{\text{Sum FQx} + \text{and o}}{R}$
F+% (Conventional Pure Form)	This variable concerns the conventional use of contour in the pure F responses. It is calculated as : $F+\% = \frac{\text{Sum F+and Fo}}{\text{Sum F}}$
Xu% (Unusual Form)	This variable concerns the proportion of answers in which contours have been used appropriately but unconventionally. It is calculated as : $Xu\% = \frac{\text{Sum FQxu}}{R}$
eb (Experience Base)	This is a relationship comparing all nonhuman movement determinants (FM and m) with the shading and achromatic color determinants. It provide information concerning stimulus demands experienced by the subjects. It is entered as Sum FM + m : Sum all C'+all T+all Y+all V.
Intellectualization Index	This index includes the special score AB (Abstract) and the contents Art and Anthropology. It is calculated as two times the number of AB answers plus the number of Art and Ay contents. Both primary and secondary contents are included.
MOR (Morbid Content)	The MOR coding is used for any responses in which an object is identified by either of two classes of characteristics. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identification of the object as dead, destroyed, ruined, spoiled, damaged, injured, or broken (e. g., a broken mirror, a dead dog, a worn out pair of boots, a bear that is hurt, a ripped piece of cloth, a wound, a torn coat, a decaying leaf, and so on).</li> <li>2. Attribution to an object of a clearly dysphoric feeling or characteristic (e. g., a gloomy house, a sad tree, an unhappy person, a person crying, depression, and so on).</li> </ol>
Afr (Affective Ratio)	This is a ratio that compares the number of answers to the last three cards with those given to the first seven card. It relates to interest in emotion stimulation. It is calculated as : $Afr = \frac{\text{Number of Responses to Cards VIII + IX + X}}{\text{Number Responses to Cards I + II + III + IV + V + VI + VII}}$
Isolation Index	This variable is related to social isolation. It involves the primary and secondary contents in five categories (Botany, Clouds, Geography, Landscape, and Nature), with the raw sum for two categories being doubled. It is calculated as : $\text{Isolate/R} = \frac{\text{Bt} + 2\text{Cl} + \text{Ge} + \text{Ls} + 2\text{Na}}{R}$

(Exner, 1993)