



BASC-3 Profiles of College Students Likely Faking ADHD symptoms

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Abstract

College students diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) often receive academic accommodations and therapeutic interventions designed to help them perform in their academic activities. Given the support, some individuals may consider falsifying or exaggerating symptoms to obtain benefits. The *Behavior Assessment System for Children – Third Edition, College Form* (BASC-3-Col; Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2015) is a widely used self-report tool to evaluate a broad spectrum of psychological functioning in young adults. Unfortunately, little is known about how individuals who intentionally exaggerate ADHD-related difficulties perform on this measure. Specifically, no studies have examined the overall psychological profile of individuals whose responses meet *F-scale Extreme Caution* criteria—suggestive of faking bad. This current study compared BASC-3-Col profiles of college students classified by the *BASC-Col F scale* as *Extreme Caution* responders compared with those of students classified as *Acceptable* and *Caution* responders. A total of 67 college students were asked to complete the BASC-3-Col and were told that they would receive a \$20 gift-card if their profile suggested meeting the criteria of ADHD. A total of 36 participants scored within the *Acceptable* range, 10 were classified as *Caution*, and 21 were classified as *Extreme Caution*. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results indicated no statistical differences for the *Inattention* or *Hyperactivity* scales. Instead, differences were found between groups on the following BASC-3-Col scales: *Atypicality*, *Depression*, *Sensation Seeking*, *Social Stress*, and *Ego Strength* ($p < .01$). Games-Howell Post-Hoc test indicated a dose-response effect in that those in the *Extreme Caution* scores significantly higher than the *Acceptable* range but not from the *Caution* group. This study contributes to the relatively limited literature on BASC-3-Col response distortion, enhances the interpretive utility of this measure in ADHD evaluations, and advances the broader goal of improving the detection of ADHD symptom exaggeration.

Keywords: ADHD; Fake-Bad; BASC-3-Col, Extreme Caution