We still haven't found what we're looking for...or have we? A preliminary investigation into academic screening and selection in clinical psychology

introduction & context

higher Education

- need for fair admissions (Schwartz report, 2004)

- use of selection tests across disciplines (e.g. medicine: Brown, 2004)

- DoH mandate on delivering high quality training & Education Outcomes Framework (2013)

NHS

- culture of refocusing on values and behaviours

- Francis inquiry: compassion and caring values as paramount

- issues of employability and the need to bed it into the curriculum (Yorke & Knight/HEA, 2006; Booth, 2003)

clinical psychology

- increase in applications since 2006 (Clearing House)

- competency model (Baron, 2011; Bartram, 2006) :academic rigour and communication skills paramount

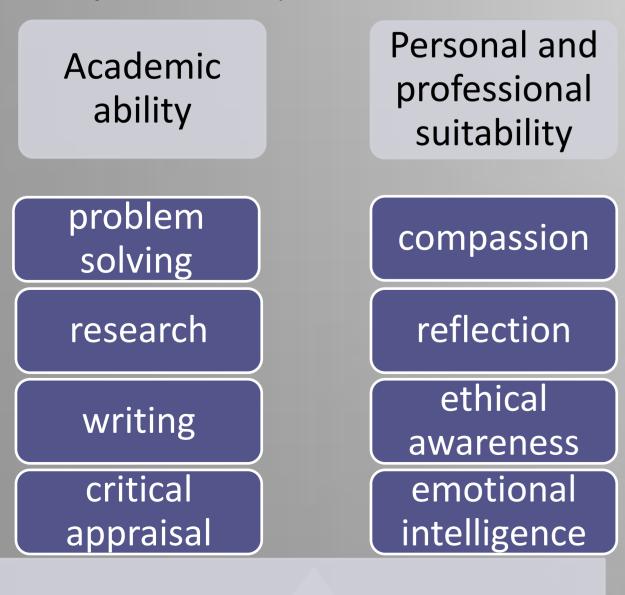
- QAA benchmark statement (2004) & HCPC standards of education & training(2012)

also.....

there is a lack of predicative validity of application forms (Hemmings & Simpson, 2008)

there is a lack of evidence for the predictive validity of selection processes in clinical psychology (Philips et al, 2004) there are biases in standard short listing processes (Philips et al, 2004)

there is some evidence from Lancaster University that a written test is predictive of academic success on training (Hemmings & Simpson, 2008)



so in 2011 Staffordshire & Keele Universities DClinPsy introduced academic screening as a short listing tool prior to interview, designed to tap into academic and research aptitude and to select the most able and suitable doctoral trainees

the investigation....

research question: *is there a relationship* between academic screening pre-interview in selection and the subsequent academic performance of clinical psychology trainees?

method: a quantitative study looking at the relationship between existing screening data, interview scores and trainee assessment records **participants**: the data from 46 trainees was used. Of these 18 were from non-screened cohorts and 28 from screened cohorts.

analysis: a combination of correlation, chi-square and t-test analysis was used to scrutinise the data

what was found?

negative correlation between screening score and interview scores – approaching significance for academic interview and total interview score.

no significant association found between the total score for year 1 assignments and screened/not screened cohorts.

significant relationship between passing at formative stage and whether in a screened or not screened cohort

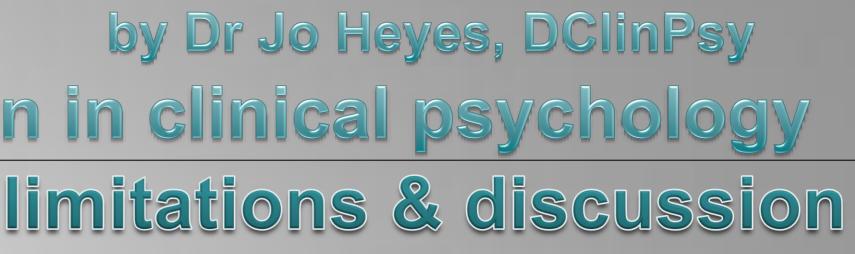
mixed picture with individual assignments some significant results with research based assignments

where does this leave us?

Academic screening appears to tap into different skills than demonstrated at interview. The results are in the right direction, but are not yet convincing.



Cognitive and meta-cognitive skills (including reflection – Dewey, 1933), critical thinking skills (Mason, 2007), and learning style (Vermunt, 1996) all relate to the mastery of academic tasks and development of expertise; even if only moderately (Robbins et al, 2004) HOWEVER ideas around situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) & the 'process of becoming' a professional (Dall'Alba, 2009) are of equal value.



•small data pool – need more time

- ongoing project need more research and more detail
- reliability and validity of current screening need more clarity
- •no qualitative data about the experience for trainees – need more variety of data
- •no information about *why* trainees do not pass at the formative stage – need more understanding
- does the screening exercise actually measure what we think it does, or does it reflect other skills such as speed typing and working under time pressure?
- •it doesn't tell us much about more clinically based competencies or 'softer' skills

does it matter anyway?

implications for teaching and learning as well as selection