

Purpose of the Monograph

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Project MATCH was conducted to provide a rigorous, large-scale study of the client-treatment matching hypothesis, a topic of keen interest to the alcohol treatment community. The generic matching hypothesis states that client outcomes can be improved by matching clients of known characteristics to specified treatments. The result of successful matching is that clients in the "matched" condition have better outcomes than similar clients assigned to an alternative treatment. The results of testing the matching hypothesis have been widely disseminated in several key Project MATCH publications (Project MATCH Research Group 1997*a, b*, 1998*a, b*, 1999) and a book that summarizes the study and its numerous contributions to the knowledge base (Babor and Del Boca, in press).

As is widely acknowledged (Project MATCH Research Group 1998*b*), evidence for matching effects was disappointing. Despite the promise of earlier matching studies (Mattson et al. 1994), the intuitively appealing notion that matching can appreciably enhance treatment effectiveness has been severely challenged. Why were so few successful matches found (Project MATCH 1997*b*, p. 1690)? It may be that matching clients based on single attributes is simply not an effective strategy to alter drinking outcomes, that is, acceptance of the null hypothesis of no effect. Or perhaps the study design was flawed in some essential way that prevented an adequate test of the hypothesis. A less obvious but critical issue is that perhaps our understanding of matching processes was inadequate, leading to flawed assumptions about the operatives involved and unsupported hypotheses.

The purpose of the present volume is to examine this latter alternative in detail. It is

important to conduct this exercise for the following reason. If the theory underlying each of the 40 predictions was adequate and yet the matches were not supported by the study results, then one would be justified in concluding that the tested matches are not important in assigning treatment, and that the theories underlying those matches are also invalid. Indeed, matching as a generic concept would be severely challenged. If, on the other hand, the matching predictions were based on inadequately developed theory, then perhaps Project MATCH did not give the generic hypothesis of client-treatment matching a fair test.

This volume focuses on what has been learned from examination of the theories underlying each of the matching hypotheses. The rationale for each a priori matching prediction is presented, as well as a complete description of the results of testing each prediction. Thus, our objective is to present the results of testing the theories from which each matching prediction was derived in greater depth than has been provided in other publications.

Preview of the Monograph

Part I describes the design and methodology used in Project MATCH. The first chapter provides a detailed introduction to the development of the matching hypotheses and discusses key design and statistical decisions made by Project MATCH to guide the testing of these hypotheses. The second chapter presents a detailed discussion of the causal chain analyses used to examine the theories underlying these hypotheses. It also describes a typology for organizing the voluminous data resulting from testing the matching hypotheses and their underlying theoretical frameworks. This provides the context

for the chapters presenting the individual matching hypotheses, results, and causal chain analyses.

Each of the 18 topical chapters follows the same general organization. First, the empirical and theoretical rationale is provided for the matching predictions, as well as the predictions themselves. Each matching variable is operationally defined, as are other variables to be included in the analyses. Next, a causal chain is provided to test the linkages hypothesized to underlie the anticipated matching effect. The data analysis plan is summarized, followed by a presentation of the results of tests of each matching prediction and its underlying causal chain. Each matching hypothesis and causal chain was tested twice, once with outpatients and once with aftercare clients. Usually, these results are presented separately. Finally, each chapter concludes with a discussion of the results of testing predictions involving this particular matching variable.

We have loosely grouped these chapters by sections. Part II has two chapters devoted to constructs pertaining to the severity of alcohol dysfunction, namely, alcohol dependence and alcohol involvement. Part III includes matching variables having to do with psychological dysfunction. The first chapter focuses on cognitive impairment. The next chapter, psychopathology, reports the results of testing predictions from two correlated matching variables, psychiatric severity and axis I psychiatric diagnoses. The third chapter in this section also focuses on two correlated matching variables, sociopathy and antisocial personality disorder. The last chapter in this section is concerned with the A versus B alcohol typology.

Part IV presents variables in the domain of person trait variables: anger, conceptual level, meaning seeking, prior religious beliefs and behaviors, interpersonal dependency, and gender.

Part V includes person variables that are conceptualized as more state- rather than trait-like in their nature. Two chapters are devoted to measures of motivational readiness: readiness to change and alcohol problem recognition. The last chapter in this section addresses two

correlated measures of self-efficacy: temptation, and temptation minus confidence.

In Part VI, the focus changes to constructs which address the clients' relationships to their interpersonal environment: network support for drinking, prior involvement with Alcoholics Anonymous, and client social functioning.

As each of these chapters has a major content focus in its own right, we recommend that the reader first approach them selectively, according to specific interest.

Finally, the concluding chapters of this monograph again approach the subject of matching as the end point in its own right. Here we attempt to summarize and critique what we have learned from Project MATCH's decade-long quest to contribute to client-treatment matching theory.

References

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