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## Questionnaires in child custody evaluations: The forgotten ubiquitous medium

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### ABSTRACT

Best practice requires that child custody evaluations (CCEs) incorporate multiple methods to sample varied sources. The family law literature is replete with discussions of four common methods of inquiry: interview, observation, review of historical documents, and the use of psychometric tests and inventories. This article defines questionnaires as a fifth method of child custody data collection that is as ubiquitous in practice as it is neglected in the literature. We define questionnaires as a valuable and unique means of collecting child custody data distinct from but complementary of these other four avenues of inquiry. Questionnaires can be critical means of collecting at least six distinct types of data: demographics, history, opinions and priorities, behavioral self-reports, perceptions of others, and for the collection of third party and collateral data. This article defines questionnaires as a unique data collection method and discusses their use in CCEs. A preliminary survey of child custody evaluators' use of questionnaires is discussed. Results find that the evaluators sampled routinely use questionnaires and find them helpful. Recommendations are offered regarding the effective use of questionnaires during a CCE. Evaluators are urged to routinely incorporate CCE questionnaires in the interest of standardization, time and cost-efficiency.

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“Arguably, instruments which are not ‘tests’ may provide the best, most relevant information to an evaluator... Such instruments may be best used to generate hypotheses and to ‘start the discussion’ but should not be used as the sole or even the primary basis upon which to draw conclusions.” (Gould-Saltman, 2005, p. 78)

Conducting a child custody evaluation (CCE) challenges far more than the professional's training, expertise, and knowledge of numerous overlapping areas of science and the law. The process demands a degree of organization unparalleled by any other task encountered in any area of mental health practice. In the simplest family constellation, CCE calls for the balanced and comprehensive sampling, interpretation, and integration

of historical, developmental, social, emotional, educational/vocational/occupational, legal, substance use, physical health, and mental health data (among others) from multiple sources concerning each of three individuals (Parent A, Parent B, and child). A CCE then requires an analysis of the “fit” within each of three or more dyadic relationships (Parent A-child, Parent B-child, and Parent A-Parent B), the fit within the system at large (Parent A-child-Parent B), and the fit between those systems and their encompassing communities (e.g., school, mental health, faith-based systems).

In support of this daunting task, child custody evaluators are expected to employ multiple methods of inquiry (e.g., American Psychological Association, 2010, item 10; 2020; Association of Family & Conciliation Courts, 2006, item 5.4). The diversity of these methods is believed to improve the balance, accuracy, and objectivity of the process, facilitating the evaluators’ generation and consideration of competing hypotheses and minimizing bias (Levitt et al., 2020).

The data collection methods that child custody evaluators most commonly employ and that are most commonly discussed in the professional literature fall into the four distinct and complementary categories outlined below.

### **Record review**

CCE routinely requires that the evaluator obtain, digest, and integrate documentation better measured in pounds or gigabytes than pages. These typically include records of psychological and physical health diagnoses, treatments, treatment compliance, and treatment responses; detoxification, rehabilitation, and recidivism; arrests, trials, and incarcerations; enrollment, matriculation, and graduation; hiring, promotions, and firings; and voluminous records of court proceedings (Goldstein, 2016). In the last decade or more, this tsunami of records has been supplemented by seemingly endless (and often redundant) threads of email, text messages, and social media posts (Knuth, 2020).

### **Interview**

Evaluators are expected to interview parents, their parenting partners, and each child (e.g., Otgaar et al., 2021; Turoy-Smith & Powell, 2017) as well as collateral sources (American Psychological Association, 2013; item 8.03; Austin, 2002). The professional literature is replete with cautions and directions about the conduct of these interviews (e.g., Lamb et al., 2007) and methods or techniques intended to structure and enhance interview with adults (e.g., First et al., 2016; Wolfington,

2005) and with children (e.g., Bricklin, 1992; Garber, 2009; Strachan et al., 2010).

## Observation

Evaluators are expected to observe dyadic and systemic interactions in litigants' homes and/or in the office (Hynan, 2016; Saini & Polak, 2014) and/or in other natural settings, emphasizing process at least as much as content (Garber, 2016). How, when, where, and for how long these observations are conducted tends to be very evaluator- or case-specific (Bow & Quinnell, 2005). Although other areas of psychological inquiry mandate the use of trained and reliable observers (e.g., Lindahl et al., 2019), CCEs have not yet adopted this expectation, an omission that frequently prompts questions about the reliability, external validity, and therefore the generalizability of these observations (Association of Family & Conciliation Courts, 2006, item 10.1; Garber, *in press*).

## Psychometric tests and inventories

A majority of psychologists who conduct CCEs incorporate individual adult psychometric instruments into the process (Ackerman & Ackerman, 1997; Valerio & Beck, 2017). Although these instruments typically generate diagnoses which are explicitly abjured in the context of CCE, most of the instruments used in this manner are normed for use with populations that may or may not be dissimilar from individuals involved in high-conflict child custody litigation. Still, advocates insist that these instruments are important means of generating hypotheses (Rappaport et al., 2018; cf., Garber & Simon, 2018).

A review of the literature suggests that the word “questionnaire” is often incorrectly used to describe a test, inventory, or structured interview method (e.g., Wolfington, 2005). It is critical to keep in mind that questionnaires are distinct from psychometric tests and inventories, yet can augment data collection from interviews as well as test selection. It is our belief that questionnaires should be considered a fifth form of data collection.

## Questionnaires

Our combined child custody practices, review of others' work products (Austin et al., 2011), and colleagues' anecdotal reports all suggest that child custody evaluators routinely employ questionnaires both as a means of organizing the flood of data invariably associated with CCE and as a fifth avenue of inquiry. Despite these informal observations suggesting the

ubiquity of this practice, a systematic search of peer-reviewed publications using the keywords *questionnaire* in conjunction with *child custody*, *child custody evaluation*, or *divorce* failed to identify any generic discussion of the subject. The term *questionnaire* is quite common in this literature, sometimes used to refer to a specific instrument employed to gather data relevant to a specific subject, as when researchers survey their colleagues' practices (e.g., Ackerman & Ackerman, 1997; Ackerman & Pritzl, 2011; Bow & Quinnell, 2005; Martindale et al., 2012). No peer-reviewed publications were identified that generically discuss the benefits, limitations, types, means of administration, interpretation and narration, or integration of questionnaires as a form of data collection in CCE.

Recognition of this oversight prompted review of the child custody guidelines and standards published by the primary mental health and family law guilds and associations. Six publications were reviewed (Herman, 1997; American Association of Matrimonial Lawyers [AAML], 2011; American Psychological Association, 2010, 2013; American Psychiatric Association, 1988; Association of Family & Conciliation Courts, 2006; National Association of Social Workers, 2010). The word *questionnaire* only appears in one of these documents, and it is used in the context of discussing informed consent when conducting anonymous research.

Discovery of this startling lacunus in the professional literature prompts this article. The present purpose is to define and distinguish questionnaires among the tools available to child custody evaluators, to acknowledge their unique strengths and weaknesses, and to describe some of the many ways in which they may be valuable to the child custody evaluation process. A preliminary survey of child custody evaluators' use of questionnaires is reviewed. On these bases, critical next steps for the recognition and inclusion of questionnaires in the context of CCE are provided. The article closes with comments about the need to include direction about the use of questionnaires in best practice standards and guidelines, as well as the need to establish structured, standardized, and adaptive questionnaires that improve the value, validity, time- and cost-efficiency of the child custody evaluation process.

### **What are tests and inventories?**

Recognizing that some authors use the term *questionnaire* to refer to tests and/or inventories, it's important to distinguish among these three very distinct avenues of inquiry (Hagan and Hagan, 2008), particularly as these bear on the collection of data in the context of CCE.

In the law, a test is an instrument that, "... ascertains the truth or the quality or fitness of a thing." (Garner & Black, 2009 p. 1473). In

psychology, a test “... is an evaluative device or procedure in which a sample of an examinee’s behavior in a specified domain is obtained and subsequently evaluated and scored using a standardized process” (American Educational Research Association (AREA), the American Psychological Association, & the National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014, p. 3). The prototypical test assesses intelligence. Like a ruler or scale, an intelligence test is intended to yield a reliable and meaningful measure of the respondent’s functioning as compared to the functioning of a matched normative group.

An inventory, by contrast, is a psychometrically sound instrument intended to elicit the respondent’s self-reported thoughts, feelings, attitudes, behaviors, and/or beliefs. These responses are scored and/or summarized by contrast with the scored and/or summarized answers or patterns of answers representing established reference groups. Tests and inventories are thus both normed, the former based on facts, the latter based on consensus.

The prototypical inventory (and the single most commonly administered “test” in CCEs [Bow & Quinnell, 2001]) is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), now in its third iteration (MMPI-3). The MMPI does not have right or wrong answers and is therefore not a test. The MMPI is, as the name indicates and despite its common identification as a “test,” an inventory. Interpretation of the instrument relies entirely upon comparisons between patterns of a respondent’s answers and patterns of answers identified in normative samples.

### **What is a questionnaire?**

A questionnaire is neither an inventory nor a test, using either the legal or psychological terms of art. In their Dictionary of Psychology, the APA defines a questionnaire as, “a set of questions or other prompts used to obtain information from a respondent about a topic of interest, such as background characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, personality, ability, or other attributes.” This definition includes not only questionnaires, as we recommend they be defined, but also the two broad categories of psychometric tests and instruments, as well as structured or semi-structured interviews. The properties of questionnaires that distinguish them from these two categories of instruments are also what allow them to serve as a useful adjunct to evaluative data collection: they are *self-administered* as well as *structured*, and *standardized* means of collecting qualitative, quantitative, or a mix of qualitative/quantitative data about an individual, a specific relationship or relationships, without deference to fact-based or

population-derived norms. *Self-administered* distinguishes questionnaires from all interviews and from many tests and inventories. Whereas answering questions in a face-to-face environment creates pressures on the respondent that can affect responses (demand characteristics; Orne, 1962), the self-administered nature of questionnaires elicits responses under less pressure. Whereas interview and the face-to-face administration of tests and inventories are contaminated by the implicit vagaries of intonation, body language, and prosody (Park and Park, 2018), a respondent who completes a questionnaire on paper or on a screen does so free of the influence of these paraverbal cues. Self-administration has the benefit of reducing variance attributable to the Hawthorne effect (Chiesa & Hobbs, 2008) at the cost of minimizing the evaluator's control over who completed the questionnaire and whether it was completed with assistance.

Whether a respondent completes an instrument with assistance has different meaning in different contexts. Whereas the use of digital (e.g., calculator) or human assistance (e.g., a co-parent) is likely to invalidate a test or inventory intended to assess the respondent, assistance of either sort may be welcome on a questionnaire intended to gather case-specific data. To illustrate: an evaluator who attempts to elicit a child's developmental history from a parent in interview risks making the process into a high-pressure test of memory that consumes a great deal of time at a commensurate expense. As a parent's ability to recall when her son first walked or was potty-trained is not generally meaningfully related to parenting, these data are more likely to be accurately recounted using a questionnaire, completed outside of the pressure and cost of evaluator scrutiny.

*Structured and standardized* means that the same items are presented in the same manner across repeat administrations. *Structured* refers specifically to the format of the questions within the instrument. *Standardized* refers to the consistent format of the instrument across administrations. These attributes distinguish questionnaires, most tests, and most inventories from open-ended interview methods. Chief among the benefits of structure and standardization is the associated ability to conduct apples-to-apples ("A2A") comparisons that allow one respondent's answers to be compared from Time1 to Time2 and/or two respondents' answers to be compared within a single time (Maughan & Schneider, 2019). Structure and standardization help to assure a balanced approach to evaluation in that the same questions are asked of each respondent in the same manner and in the same sequence on every administration (Association of Family & Conciliation Courts, 2006, item 5.5). "...Utilizing a structured evaluation system ... ensures that evaluators gather all of the relevant information and minimizes bias as they are conducting the evaluation" (Geffner et al., 2009, p. 207).

Questionnaires are distinct from tests or instruments in that they are *not* intended to provide comparisons to normative groups. Population-based norms allow scoring and meaningful interpretation of individual responses as more or less typical of the larger group. Because test and inventory normative groups are typically derived from studies of samples of the population and not from studies of the entire population, any comparison to these norms and associated interpretations must be couched in an understanding of the size and representativeness of the sample from which the norms are derived (American Psychological Association, 2013). This is routinely an issue when tests and inventories are incorporated into CCEs because establishing norms for this presumably heterogeneous, high stress, and highly litigious population is notoriously difficult (Lamb, 2005).

Because questionnaires are, by this definition, means of eliciting an individual's response to questions for further exploration, population-derived norms are often irrelevant and, therefore, concerns about sampling and representativeness are similarly irrelevant. Questionnaires are not scored and interpreted relevant to a reference group outside the specific individual or family system in question. They are intended, instead, to collect data that can be incorporated into a narrative description of the family at issue and/or to guide further inquiry. For this reason, questionnaires are better considered windows into the respondent's life than objective assessments of the respondent's thinking, feeling, or behavior.

This is not to say that all questionnaires are entirely without a factual foundation. Questionnaires that tap demographic data (e.g., respondent's contact information), historical data (e.g., a parent's report of a child's development) and/or data about one party's perceptions of another (e.g., a father's report of his daughter's diet) are objectively verifiable in terms of individual facts rather than population-based norms.

### ***CCE and questionnaires***

Questionnaires can (1) facilitate record review by identifying historical events, agencies, organizations, and people from which records should be requested; (2) set the stage for interviews and observations by delimiting those variables that are in dispute and those variables that are not; (3) and guide the selection and subsequent interpretation of tests and inventories, as when self-report data suggest a substance abuse history, which puts interview responses in perspective and reinforces the evaluator's rationale to conduct a more comprehensive addictions assessment.

Questionnaires may be most useful when they are front-loaded, that is, delivered for completion at the start of CCE, preliminary even to first interviews. Front-loading the evaluation process in this manner can help



the evaluator to narrow the scope of inquiry and use time more efficiently. For example, reviewing and contrasting the litigants' respective family histories via questionnaire responses can clarify which events are agreed upon and deserving of least follow-up and which events are disputed and deserving of greater follow-up.

Front-loading questionnaires can also make CCE more efficient by allowing the evaluator to prepare and distribute associated paperwork (e.g., requests for records from physicians, educators, and therapists; requests for personal references from collaterals) as early as possible, thereby diminishing delays associated with incorrect contact information, agencies that insist on using their own consent forms, disorganized, reluctant, and procrastinating respondents. Front-loading questionnaires can identify previously unknown persons who are not parties to the litigation but who are nonetheless reasonably incorporated in the evaluation process (e.g., a parent's significant other, a nanny, or therapist). Addressing the often-conflictual question about these persons' roles in the evaluation early in the process is far more time- and cost-efficient than addressing the same question midway through the process.

Questionnaires serve at least five distinct purposes, outlined below.

### ***Demographic questionnaires***

These instruments solicit identifying data about one or more persons relevant to the pending evaluation. This typically includes family members, collaterals, present and past professional service providers, agencies, and organizations. Relevant data typically includes full name (and all former names), date of birth, mailing and physical addresses, phone and email contacts, and clarification of the identified individual's role in the child's or family's functioning. By collecting these data early in the evaluation process, informed consent documents and additional questionnaires (e.g., collateral questionnaires) can be more efficiently generated, distributed, completed, and integrated into the process.

### ***Historical questionnaires***

Chronological data collected via questionnaire can help to frame the referral question, suggest previously unknown avenues of inquiry, and begin to highlight important differences between respondents. These instruments can focus broadly on accounts of the family's history or narrowly on particular eras or topics (e.g., the parents' accounts of their own medical, psychiatric, legal, educational/occupational/vocational histories or their children's developmental histories).

### ***Opinion and priority questionnaires***

Questionnaires create an excellent medium to solicit respondents' thoughts and feelings about specific topics in advance of interview. An opinion questionnaire may approach this task by posing open-ended (e.g., "How much privacy should a child be allowed?"), multiple choice, and/or True/False items. A priority questionnaire asks the respondent to rank order a fixed list of alternatives in terms of experience, preference, importance, value, or the actual or idealized investment of time, money, or energy (e.g., "which one of the following five items is most important to you? Which is second most important to you...?").

Responses to opinion and priority questionnaires may be qualitative or quantitative. In either format, responses lend themselves to comparisons within (e.g., "Mother values education more than she values income") and between respondents (e.g., "Mother values her children's involvement in athletics less than Father values the same.") These data provide evaluators with a frame within which particular behaviors might be queried in subsequent interviews (e.g., "Can you help me understand why you keep your daughter home from school if education is your top priority?").

### ***Behavior questionnaires***

A fourth type of questionnaire asks respondents to describe their own actual (e.g., "what did you do when you first learned you were pregnant?") or hypothetical (e.g., "how do you respond when your child refuses a request?") behaviors as distinct from their abstract beliefs. In the context of CCEs, behavior questionnaires can set the stage for comparing self-reported or hypothetical behaviors with documented behaviors, thereby generating hypotheses about the respondent's veracity and insight. This information can be elicited using open-ended questions, (e.g., "what do you do when...?"), multiple choice questions (e.g., "which one of the following best describes your behavior?"), and/or True/False questions (e.g., "I nap most days.").

### ***Perception-of-others questionnaires***

This type of questionnaire solicits respondents' observations and/or beliefs about identified others' thoughts, feelings, and/or actions. Responses to these queries can generate hypotheses both about the respondent and the identified subject (e.g., a child or co-parent) of the questionnaire. In the context of CCE, these instruments are particularly important windows into how co-parents see one another (e.g., "do you believe that your child's other parent supports your role in the child's life?"), how parents see their

children (e.g., “What does your child do when she is scared?”), and in some cases how children see their parents (e.g., which of these adjectives best describes your father?”).

Whereas historical questionnaires invite evaluators to contrast a respondent’s report with documented historical facts in interview, perception-of-others questionnaires invite comparisons between respondent perceptions and documented behaviors in interview (e.g., “can you help me understand how these emails fit with your description of your co-parent as non-communicative?”). Both types of questionnaires can help to generate hypotheses about respondent veracity, perceptions, biases, and psychological defenses.

### ***Third-party and collateral questionnaires***

In one final application, questionnaires can be powerful means of gathering a structured and standardized range of responses from others involved in and concerned with the larger custody issue. This facilitates A2A comparisons between third-party respondents (e.g., how each of two successive therapists diagnosed an individual) and help to minimize concerns about evaluator bias by assuring that the same breadth of data is solicited from respondents on each side of the litigation.

The rationale for initially soliciting third-party and collaterals’ responses via questionnaire is two-fold. First, many third-party informants are very anxious if not threatened by the prospect of becoming involved in litigation. Advance receipt of a questionnaire reassures and clarifies by delimiting the field of inquiry and perhaps even conveying something about the evaluator’s manner. Second, advance receipt and review of third-party and collaterals’ questionnaires can narrow the field of subsequent inquiry by clarifying which respondents are willing to cooperate, which are likely to provide valuable data, and which offer neither.

Further, with regard to collaterals,

... evaluators noted the value of having a written record of the collaterals’ responses to specific, structured questions about the nature of their relationship with the parents, as well as their written observations in their own words. It was further noted that the inclusion of written responses may provide an easy format for informed consent and release of information signatures as well as provide a permanent record of the collaterals’ statements. Written responses may even be more ‘pure’ as sources of information from an evidentiary point of view (Kirkland, 2002, p. 186).

### ***A caution?***

Although the utility of these various types of questionnaires is apparent, there are those who challenge their legitimacy as a means of collecting

CCE data. Relevant concerns include the reliability of self-report responses and the risk that respondents have employed others while responding (Bow & Quinnell, 2004; Pepiton et al., 2014). Of course these concerns are valid, but are by no means unique to questionnaires. Evaluators must be alert to deception, defensiveness, and misdirection in every avenue of inquiry.

## Methods

In the absence of any peer-reviewed literature or best practice guidance regarding the utility of questionnaires, the authors determined to survey child custody evaluators about these issues. A questionnaire was developed for this purpose. Because the instrument thus generated is a questionnaire about questionnaires, it is identified hereinafter as the *meta-questionnaire*.

In order to create the meta-questionnaire, the authors independently generated a pool of more than one hundred multiple-choice questions representing the full breadth of our combined interest in and experience with questionnaires as a means of inquiry in the context of CCEs. The authors then reviewed the total pool of items to discard face-evident redundancies, minimize ambiguity, and maximize the scope of inquiry. Wording was mutually edited in an attempt to minimize bias and eliminate leading questions. The instrument was then uploaded for online administration. A pool of child custody evaluators beta tested the instrument and provided feedback regarding format, content, and ease of access. Beta testers were excluded from the final pool of respondents summarized below.

Respondents were elicited via English-speaking child custody-related listservs and through guild association advertisements around the world. No incentive for participation was offered. No identifying information was collected. The preliminary nature of this inquiry did not allow for the collection of demographics or assessment of self-selection biases (Braver & Bay, 1992). Fifty-two (52) self-identified child custody evaluators completed the meta-questionnaire. Respondents span the United States, Canada, Australia, and South Africa. Within the United States, at least fifteen states were represented. Respondents included varied degrees of educational achievement (masters and doctoral degrees), of which 36.5% had specific training in the process of CCEs. The majority of respondents report that they conduct between three (3) and twenty (20) CCEs annually.

The first iteration of the 20-item meta-questionnaire was found to yield low metric properties based on its negative Cronbach's alpha. Items were reevaluated and elimination of items thus resulted in the reduction of the meta-questionnaire from a 20-item to a 5-item bank. This yielded strong

Cronbach's alpha (.92). The remaining items discussed the following: (1) whether respondents used questionnaires for their CCEs, (2) if questionnaires were self-created or taken from a commercial distributor, (3) personal beliefs on questionnaires, (4) when to administer questionnaires in the course of CCE, and (5) the required time of completion of the questionnaires during CCE process.

## Results

Evaluator responses yield the following summary observations: Fifty-seven percent (57%) of respondents endorsed the value of questionnaires as a means of collecting data in the course of conducting a CCE while a full two-thirds (67.3%) of respondents routinely incorporate questionnaires into their CCE evaluation process. Actual usage exceeds endorsements because some respondents work in environments that require the use of questionnaires of uncertain value. Almost one fifth of respondents (17.7%) complained that questionnaire data are too easily manipulated and are thereby unreliable.

Among those who routinely use questionnaires as part of the CCE process, half (50%) recommend collecting questionnaire data before conducting individual adult interviews but only 39% make this a requirement. One-fifth (21.4%) collect questionnaire data concurrent with individual adult interviews. The remainder collect questionnaire data at various times across the course of CCE as the need arises.

Finally, one quarter of respondents (25.5%) expressed a strong need for access to well-constructed, standardized questionnaires for use collecting CCE data.

## Discussion

Child custody evaluators are directed to elicit data via multiple methods. The extant literature emphasizes the use of record review, interview, observation, and tests and inventories but fails to recognize a ubiquitous fifth avenue of inquiry. Questionnaires are distinct from each of these other methods and can serve at least six identifiable purposes in the context of CCE. They offer clear advantages to both the litigating parent-*cum*-evaluee and to the evaluator. By front-loading questionnaires, evaluators can further assure that the ensuing evaluation is thorough, time- and therefore cost-efficient.

A review of the child custody evaluation standards and guidelines promulgated by the major mental health guilds and family law associations fails to find any reference to the use of questionnaires as a distinct method

of inquiry. This failure needs to be corrected in subsequent iterations of these publications emphasizing the variety of types or purposes of questionnaires, the benefits and potential detriments of their use, and the ubiquity of the practice to improve the quality and efficiency of the CCE process.

In the absence of prior peer-reviewed publications addressing the benefits and limitations of questionnaires as part of the CCE process, the authors conducted an exploratory survey of child custody evaluators. Results suggest that questionnaires are in popular use and that carefully crafted child custody-specific questionnaires are in high demand. Although some skepticism was identified among evaluators who fear that questionnaire data is too easily manipulated, evaluators must be alert to this concern no matter the source of any particular datum. Surprisingly, only a minority of our sample use questionnaires to elicit data from third parties and collateral sources. Respondents expressed a thirst for both a library of CCE questionnaires and ties between questionnaires and the empirical literature in the field.

These questionnaire observations must be considered preliminary given the risks associated with self-selection among respondents, sample size, and our inability to segregate data by respondent training, guild affiliation, and/or practice setting. At the least, the opinions expressed in this study support our contention that further attention to the construction, administration, and collection of CCE data via questionnaires is warranted. Further study of how and when questionnaires are used, their strengths and weaknesses in these applications can only help to improve the time- and cost-efficiency, the reliability and the validity of CCEs.

Replication and expansion of meta-questionnaire data collection is expected to clarify these results and allow interpretation of how differences of training, guild, and practice setting bear on the perceived value of questionnaire data. Our goal remains demonstration of the time- and cost-savings accrued when questionnaires are utilized by comparison to matched CCEs processes that do not incorporate questionnaires to collect data.

### **Disclosure of interest**

The authors have received no funding for and have no fiduciary interests in the research reported.

### **Ethical standards and informed consent**

All procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation [institutional and

national] and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2000. Informed consent was obtained from all patients for being included in the study.

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