

## Assessment of Neurotic Symptoms in Irish Female Patients\*

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The purpose of this short paper is to draw attention to the higher scores on neurotic scales found by the authors in Irish female subjects in three separate comparative studies of different categories of Irish and British hospital patients, using three different instruments for enquiry.

### METHOD

Sections M-R of the Cornell Medical Index, and the Leyton Obsessional Inventory (L.O.I.) were used to examine patients admitted to orthopaedic wards in Cork and London hospitals following accidents, and the average scores compared. The exact method is detailed elsewhere (Kelleher, 1972). The Cornell Medical Index (Sections M-R) scores of Irish-born and British-born male and female patients attending the Maudsley out-patients department for the first time in 1968 and part of 1969 were also examined and their average scores compared. Lastly, the Present State Examinations recorded on 21 female patients, selected because each was diagnosed as having an affective disorder by the U.S./U.K. Diagnostic Project, from among 57 consecutive mental hospital admissions in Cork, were analysed and compared with 55 British female patients, who were similarly examined, diagnosed and selected from 174 random mental hospital patients admitted in London. The details of the method have been described (Kelleher and Copeland, 1973).

### RESULTS

*Cork-London comparison of orthopaedic in-patients.* Irish female patients had higher C.M.I. (Sections M-R) scores than either British females ( $p < .001$ ) or Irish males ( $p < .02$ ) (Table I). The highest scores on the C.M.I., and on the L.O.I., were obtained by Irish women living in rural areas (Table II).

*Maudsley out-patient comparison.* Irish-born female out-patients had higher C.M.I. scores than either British-born female ( $p < .01$ ) or Irish-born male out-patients ( $p < .02$ ) (Table II).

*Cork-London comparisons of mental hospital admissions.* Irish female admissions diagnosed as affective disorder by U.S./U.K. Diagnostic Project, had higher

TABLE I  
*High average Cornell scores (Sections M-R) of Irish female patients compared to British female and Irish male patients*

	No.	Average score	t =	Probability
<i>Orthopaedic in-patients</i>				
Irish females ..	22	13.31	3.6442	$P < .001$
British females ..	29	7.79		
Irish females ..	22	13.31	2.4201	$P < .02$
Irish males ..	51	9.21		
<i>Psychiatric out-patients</i>				
Irish females ..	23	25.21	2.6111	$p < .01$
British females ..	298	19.02		
Irish females ..	23	25.21	2.5402	$p < .02$
Irish males ..	40	18.07		

TABLE II  
*Obsessional symptom, trait and Cornell scores by place of dwelling of Irish and British women*

	Dwelling place			
	Rural	Small town	Cork City	London
Number:	7	8	7	29
Mean symptom score	24.42	18.00	15.00	13.79
Mean trait score	12.57	12.00	10.14	9.98
Mean Cornell score	16.57	12.50	11.00	7.41

scores on those scales derived from P.S.E. covering obsessions ( $p < .05$ ) and anxiety on examination ( $p < .05$ ), than their British counterparts in London (Table III).

### CONCLUSION

These results are reported because although different selection factors were at work in nominating

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TABLE III  
*Sections scores (from P.S.E.) that discriminated between Irish and British female affectives*

	Great Britain (N = 55)		Ireland (N = 21)		T	p
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.		
Anxiety O/E .. .. .	1·61	2·78	2·66	3·84	2·3336	p < ·05*
Obsessions .. .. .	·60	1·73	1·57	4·34	1·9906	p < ·05*
Over activity symptoms ..	2·60	21·65	·61	·99	2·9820	p < ·01†
Insight .. .. .	1·70	3·66	·47	1·39	3·3824	p < ·01†

\* Indicates higher in Irish.

† Indicates higher in British.

subjects for inclusion in these three studies, Irish female patients emerged with consistently higher neurotic scores on the three instruments used for examination. These findings do not prove that neurotic illness is commoner among Irish female patients, nor do they indicate that the community prevalence of neurotic symptoms in women is likely to be greater in Ireland than elsewhere. They do, however, suggest caution in interpreting the scores

of Irish females on scales which were standardized with reference to different populations.

#### REFERENCES

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