EUROPEAN
POLYGRAPH
Volume 5 • 2011 • Number 2 (16)

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Liecatcher Polygraph Series
Jerusalem,
ISRAEL

Polygraph Verification Test

Abstract

If we as examiners wish to define what is the most problematic part of a polygraph test while conducting a Comparison Question Test (CQT) the answer would be adjusting the correct comparison question for this particular examinee. A few years ago the author asked Cleve Backster how he would define a good comparison question, and his answer was "the one which gives us the correct result." An examiner from Canada once told the author that development of a Comparison Question is 50% knowledge, and 50% art. Due to the problem of proper selection and introduction of the Comparison Questions (CQ), many examiners finish a test questioning whether or not their result was correct based on their selection and introduction of this question.

In 2003, the author learned from Nathan J. Gordon, the Polygraph Validation test (PVT). It was explained that this method could be used to identify false

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positive results, verify deceptive results, and in the latter case, assist in breaking a deceptive examinee's objections. Later it was explained that the original idea for this new method came from William L. Fleisher (Gordon's partner) and that Gordon then modified and applied it.
The PVT is administered as a Peak Of Tension Test, or more correctly, a Guilty Knowledge Test after the administration of a CQT, providing the examinee different possible reasons for his failure of the CQT, while monitoring on which of the reasons he is focusing on.

The Research Method

Seventy-three (73) cases, consisting of 188 examinees, were selected, in which we were able to examine all possible suspects. Out of the 73 cases, 48 were confirmed by confession. The tests were conducted by three examiners in Costa Rica. The format used was the Integrated Zone Comparison Test (IZCT), using formats with 4 relevant questions as well as 3 relevant questions. All tests were multi-faceted in nature.

During the pre-test interview each examinee was informed that the procedure included 2 tests: one regarding the issue under investigation, and the other regarding possible reasons the initial test may have indicated that the examinee lied regarding the target issue. This second test, it was explained, would serve as a confirmation to the result of the initial test, or perhaps offer a plausible reason why a truthful person may have failed the test. It was further explained that since the second test (PVT) would be administered before the initial test was analyzed, that the examiner would not know the outcome of either test until after data from both examinations was collected.

Regardless of the result of the initial IZCT (CQT), which were based on numerical scoring (Horizontal Scoring System and 3 point spot analysis), a single chart of the PVT test was then administered.

After the pre-test interview was completed a regular IZCT was conducted. After all of the IZCT data was collected the examinee was asked: "Do you remember that we said we are going to conduct another test? In case the test we

just finished indicates you did not tell the truth, there could be more than one reason. This test will help identify exactly what that reason was."

PVT Questions

Pre-fix: If your first test indicates you failed, was it because:

1. you were tired?
2. you did not understand the questions?
3. you were afraid that I would ask a question we did not review?
4. you lied to questions regarding your personality (CQ's)?
5. you were involved in the target issue(s)?
6. a mistake occurred in the test?
7. you do not believe in the procedure?

Analysis of PVT Data

The PVT is analyzed the same way as a Guilty knowledge or a Peak of Tension test. The key question is number 5. The reaction could be either an anticipatory reaction common in a Peak of Tension format, or a spot reaction when question 5 is compared with questions 4, which refers to lying to the Comparison Question on the IZCT test, or 6, which would almost be like a Directed Lie question (DLC), since it would be the position of any innocent examinee that a mistake must have occurred.

Results

In this research, 188 examinees were tested utilizing this two stage approach of the traditional IZCT/CQT, followed by the application of a single chart of PVT.

An example of a case with three examinees showing their PVT tests:

Of the 188 examinees tested, the IZCT CQT analysis resulted in two (2) inclusive determinations, which were eliminated from the study. Of the 186 remaining IZCT CQT examinations, the PVT results were in total agreement with 184 of the initial determinations. The results of the PVT for the remaining 2 were inconclusive due to a lack of reactions to C4, R5, or C6. Interestingly, both of these examinees were truthful to the target issues and it appears had no psychological commitment to the questions in the PVT.

In the two inconclusive examinations eliminated from the study, the PVT indicated both examinees were deceptive. Both of these PVT results were then verified by confession.

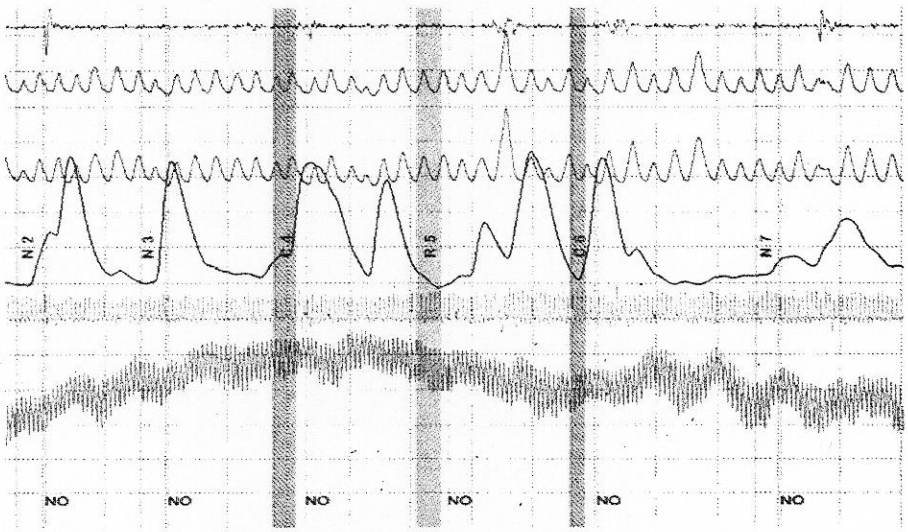
Remarks

The author has been contacted by two other independent examiners who utilized the PVT after CQT formats. In a private examination in Israel, an inclusive CQT result was determined to be deceptive by the PVT, which was then confirmed by confession. In a law enforcement examination in the United States, a deceptive CQT result was made questionable by a truthful PVT result, and the examinee was later determined to be innocent by the ongoing investigation. In both of these cases the PVT resulted in correct outcomes changing an inconclusive result to a proper determination of deception, and changing a false/positive result into a correct determination of truthful.

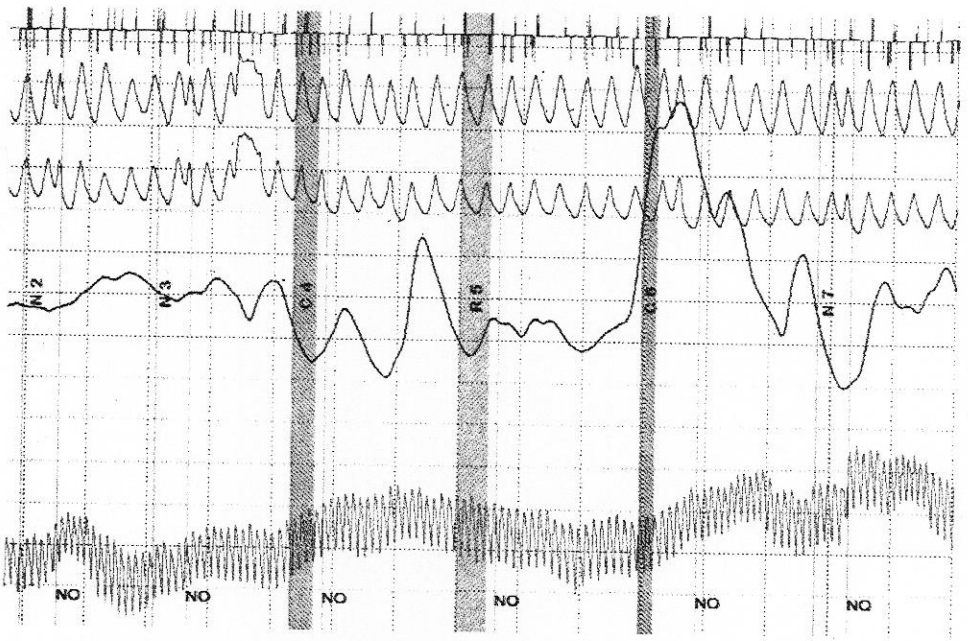
Summary

Based on the current study it appears that the PVT is a valid way to confirm the result of the CQT, which takes minimal time to complete, and can actually serve to increase the accuracy of the polygraph procedure.

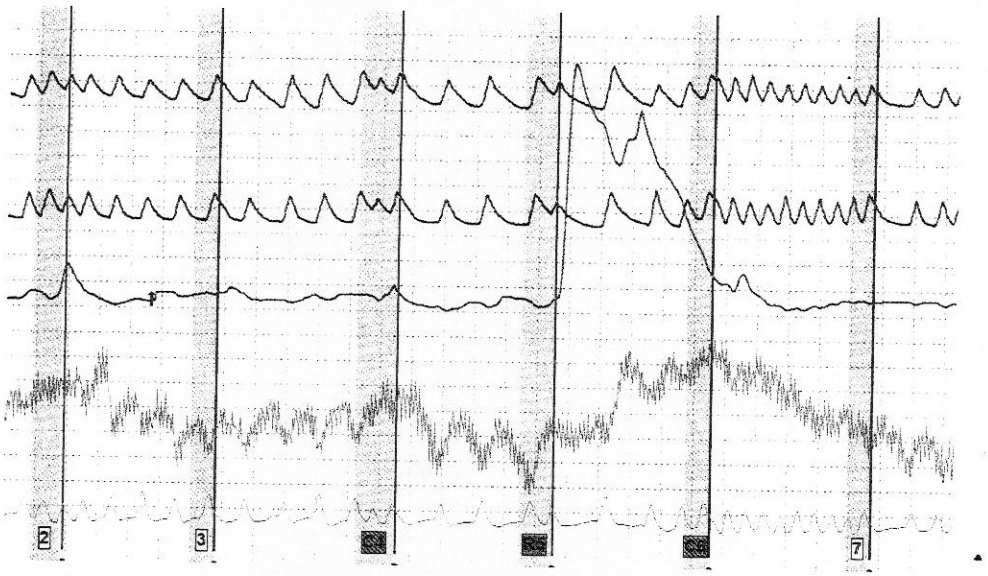
A significant reaction in the PVT to R5, with a deceptive, as later verified, examinee. Note the lack of reaction to C4 and C6, as well as the classic peak of tension "global" evaluation.



The PVT chart of the second examinee, who was later verified as truthful. This examinee is focused on the CQ's.



The PVT chart of the third examinee, later verified as truthful. Once again, the more significant reactions occurred to CQ's.



Another deceptive chart recorded with another brand of instrument

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