It is estimated that approximately one half of all current marriages will eventually end in divorce (Glick, 1984). This highlights the difficulty individuals have in building and maintaining satisfying marriages. One approach to helping couples develop lasting and satisfying marriages is to better prepare engaged couples for marriage (Olson, 1983).

In recent years, premarital inventories have emerged as an important tool to help engaged couples prepare for marriage. One of the most widely used premarital inventories is PREPARE. PREPARE is a 125-question inventory designed to assess relationship strengths and work areas for engaged couples (Fournier, Olson, & Druckman, 1983; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). PREPARE questions were developed to tap a variety of issues relevant to marital relationships, including areas that the research literature indicated were the most common sources of conflict for couples (Fournier et al., 1 98 3, p. 232). PREPARE is the only premarital inventory to report any follow-up research assessing the predictive validity of the instrument. Two studies (Fowers & Olson, 1986; Larsen & Olson, 1989) demonstrated the predictive validity of PREPARE with couples married 2 to 3 years.

Another widely used premarital inventory is FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study). FOCCUS has replaced the Pre-Marital Inventory (PMI) as the predominant premarital inventory used in marriage preparation by the Roman Catholic Church. FOCCUS is used by approximately two thirds of the Roman Catholic dioceses in the country. It is also used by over 500 Protestant churches of different denominations. Unlike PREPARE, however, no follow-up studies had been done on the predictive validity of FOCCUS. Therefore, the aim of this study was to evaluate the predictive validity of FOCCUS.

Like PREPARE, the purpose of FOCCUS is to provide couples with objective criteria for assessing their relationship. By providing each couple with individualized feedback on their relationship, premarital inventories like FOCCUS and PREPARE are intended to help a couple discuss and explore their relationship's strengths and areas for growth (Fournier et al., 1983). The individualized feedback also helps premarital counselors tailor their instruction to provide maximum benefit for the couple.

FOCCUS was developed to offer several advantages over existing premarital inventories. First, FOCCUS was developed to reflect the most current body of knowledge on what is necessary for a successful marriage. Second, FOCCUS was developed so it could be used with a wide variety of couples, including two-career marriages, teen marriages, older marriages, interfaith marriages, and second marriages. Third, FOCCUS is unique because some of the questions reflect the values and ideals of a sacramental marriage as defined by the Roman Catholic Church (e.g., permanency, fidelity, openness to children, forgiveness, the role of shared faith and values, unconditional loving). FOCCUS also offers a nondenominational version for non-Catholic couples. Fourth, FOCCUS is available in a variety of formats, including Spanish, Braille, and audiotapes. Fifth, FOCCUS is one of the least expensive premarital inventories to administer.

FOCCUS helps couples explore their relationship in the following 15 areas: personality match, marriage convenant (representing a Catholic view of marriage), life style expectations, communication, friends and interests, problem solving, parenting, religion and values, second marriages (where applicable), interfaith marriages (where applicable), personal issues (e.g., jealousy, drug/alcohol use, moodiness, etc.), readiness for marriage, finances, sexuality, and extended family. FOCCUS also highlights certain questions from the inventory as key problem indicators because they may be indicative of serious problems in the relationship.

Assessing the predictive validity of FOCCUS is important because the instrument is widely used for marriage preparation. The FOCCUS computer service currently scores approximately 30,000 forms a year. However, this represents only a portion of the total FOCCUS inventories administered each year since many are self-scored by hand or through computer packages. Demonstrating the predictive validity of FOCCUS would help confirm that the instrument's questions and topics are important areas to address in marriage preparation. Furthermore, with strong predictive validity, greater confidence could be placed in the instrument's ability to help identify couples who are at risk for developing distressed marriages. If a couple were confirmed to be at risk after further evaluation, then they could be encouraged to extend their engagement, reevaluate their decision to marry, or seek additional preparation through structured programs or premarital counseling (Fowers & Olson, 1986).

METHODOLOGY

The Sample

The goal of the study was to target couples who had been married 4 to 5 years and had completed the FOCCUS instrument prior to marriage. Since 07e number of divorces peaks after 2 years of marriage (National Center for Health Statistics, 1990), couples married 4 to 5 years should be past this critical period. Assessing couples who had been married longer than 4 to 5 years was not feasible due to the length of time FOCCUS had been available.

The first step in collecting the data was to locate couples who had taken the FOCCUS inventory 5 years earlier. Shortly after FOCCUS was first introduced, the developers of FOCCUS (Family Life Office in Omaha) asked couples to fill out information cards if they were willing to be contacted for later follow-up. The information cards contained the couple's initials, an identification code, and either the couple's or parents' address (or in some cases both) that could be used for follow-up contact.

The developers of FOCCUS had information cards on approximately 1,200 couples who took the FOCCUS inventory in 1986. Cards that contained only the couple's address for follow-up were not used since it was believed that most engaged couples would have moved within the 5-year period. However, the majority of cards (n = 820) had a parent's address for follow-up. Every other card with a parent's address was selected in order to yield a sample of 410 cards that would be used to locate potential couples for the study.

The parent(s) listed on the information card was contacted and asked to fill out an information sheet on the couple. Dillman's method (1978) was followed to obtain a high response rate. Using this method, parents were initially sent an information sheet requesting the engaged couple's names, current address(es), and marital status. One week later, a postcard was sent to the parents encouraging them to fill out the information sheet if they had not already done so. Parents who had not responded within 3 weeks were sent a second information sheet. Although Dillman suggests a 7-week mailing for nonrespondents, this was deemed unnecessary due to a high response rate (88%) without the additional mailing.

Thirty-two of the information sheets were returned by the post office because they were undeliverable, resulting in a sample of 78 parents that were successfully contacted. A total of 333 information sheets were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 88% based on the 378 parents that could be contacted. Out of the 333 information sheets returned, 20 couples were ineligible for the study because they had broken off their engagement (n = 11), addresses for both partners were not provided (n = 7), or the couple communicated through their parents that they did not want to participate in the study (n = 2).

Only 24 of the 333 couples (7.2%) reported being divorced, annulled, or separated, which is lower than the 18% of couples one would predict would be divorced after 4 years of marriage (National Center for Health Statistics, 1990). One or more factors could potentially account for this low percentage of divorced, annulled, and separated couples in the sample. First, being religious and having a church ceremony have both been shown to correlate with a lower divorce rate (Raschke, 1987). Since FOCCUS is typically given through church marriage preparation programs, it is reasonable to assume that the large majority of couples in this study are religious and had a church ceremony. Further evidence for the religiosity of the sample is based on the fact that 90% (n = 373) of the individuals reported attending church at least occasionally (71% [n = 293] reported attending frequently or always). Therefore, one would expect a somewhat lower divorce rate among this group compared to the national average.

Second, it is possible that a high percentage of the nonresponses may have been divorced or separated couples. For example, parents of divorced/separated couples may not have responded to protect their children since divorce often carries a stigma among Roman Catholics. Or divorced/separated individuals may have communicated to their parents their unwillingness to participate in the study.

Finally, the process of taking FOCCUS could have reduced the number of divorced or separated couples in two ways. First, taking FOCCUS may have prevented some divorces by helping some couples identify and address problem areas before they escalated. Second, couples who might have divorced if they had married might have decided to break off their engagement based on what they learned from taking FOCCUS. The Family Life Office in the Archdiocese of Omaha has documented that approximately 3-7% of couples postponed their marriage or decided not to marry when premarital inventories were not included in marriage preparation. However, approximately 17% of

couples postponed or decided not to many when marriage preparation programs began using premarital inventories.

In the second stage of data collection, questionnaires were sent to the 313 eligible couples to assess their marital status and marital quality. Each individual (N= 626) was sent a questionnaire under separate cover and was instructed to complete his or her questionnaire without consulting his or her partner. Dillman's method (1978) was again followed, with a postcard reminder sent after 1 week and a second questionnaire sent to nonrespondents after 3 weeks. After 7 weeks, nonrespondents were sent a third questionnaire via certified mail to encourage their response.

A total of 458 individuals returned their questionnaires, resulting in a 73.2% response rate. This compares favorably to the 72.4% response rate quoted by Dillman(l 978, p. 189) for public surveys following his protocol. A small portion of the questionnaires could not be used because the individual's partner did not respond (n = 36 individuals), the FOCCUS scores could not be located (n = 3 couples), or the questionnaire contained too much missing data (n = 1 couple). The final sample consisted of 207 couples, representing 66.1 % of the 3 1 3 couples eligible for the study.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic information for the 207 couples used in the study.(Table 1 omitted) Less than 10% (n = 25) of the men and women had been previously married. This is not surprising given that the sample was approximately three quarters Roman Catholic. The average length of courtship for the couples was 3 1 months, but varied from 1 month to over 99 months. The average age of the men in 1 986 was 25 years; the average age of the women was 23 years. Only 8 (3.9%) of the couples reported being pregnant at the time of their engagement.

After the 5-year follow-up, the couples had been married an average of 4.3 years. Only 8 (3.9%) couples reported being either separated, divorced, or annulled. Since the FOCCUS scores reflect couple data, permission from both partners was required before their data could be used in the study. Unfortunately, approximately 40% of the divorced individuals who responded to the survey did not have their partner respond, which prevented their data from being used in the study.

Some cautions should be noted regarding the generalizability of the findings based on the sample. The sample was predominantly composed of Roman Catholic individuals from the Midwest because FOCCUS was primarily used by Roman Catholic churches in this region during 1986. Given that FOCCUS is currently being used primarily with couples which include at least one Roman Catholic partner, a predominantly Roman Catholic sample is appropriate for testing the predictive validity of FOCCUS. Strictly speaking, one should be cautious in generalizing the FOCCUS results to Roman Catholic couples living outside the Midwest. However, it is expected that the predictive validity of FOCCUS would generalize for Roman Catholic couples living throughout the country since it is unlikely that Roman Catholics from the Midwest would respond differently to FOCCUS than those living outside the Midwest.

It is unclear whether FOCCUS would have predictive validity if taken by non-Catholic couples. Although some of the religious questions were designed with Roman Catholic beliefs in mind, the large majority of the instrument explores areas that pertain to all couples preparing for marriage. It is also important to note that a significant number of non-Catholics (n = 95, or 23%) are included in the study due to the large number of interfaith marriages in the sample. This suggests that the predictive validity of FOCCUS might hold for nonCatholic couples, but this would need to be confirmed with additional research.

Another possible limit on the generalizability of the findings is the small percentage (3.9%) of divorced, annulled, and separated couples in the final sample. The number of divorced, annulled, and separated couples is somewhat underrepresented since some of these couples had to be excluded from the study because both partners did not respond. Furthermore, the low percentage (7.2%) of divorced, annulled, or separated couples located for the study suggests that these couples may have been undersampled. However, one might expect a lower divorce rate since FOCCUS is used primarily with a religious population, which is known to have a lower divorce rate than nonreligious couples (Raschke, 1987). It is also possible that FOCCUS prevented some divorces through strengthening marriages or leading couples to break off their engagements.

Measuring Marital Quality

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) by Spanier(1976) was chosen to measure marital quality because it is reported to have good validity and reliability (Spanier, 1976), is short in length, and can be administered at no cost. Another important advantage of the DAS is that studies are available (Crane, Allgood, Larson, & Griffin, 1990; Spanier, 1976) that report DAS norms for both distressed and nondistressed couples. This permits one to identify a cutoff score using these norms rather than using an arbitrary convention such as a median split.

A DAS cutoff score of 104 was used to identify high versus low quality marriages and was calculated using the formula proposed by Jacobson, Follette, and Revenstorf (1984) when functional and dysfunctional populations overlap. Functional and dysfunctional DAS means and standard deviations were based on data from a study (Crane et al., 1990) comparing clinical versus nonclinical couples. Spanier's (1976) norms were not used since his dysfunctional group is based on divorced individuals rather than distressed intact marriages.

Couples were initially classified into one of four categories for marital quality: (a) high quality (where both had DAS scores of 104 or above); (b) mixed quality (where only one partner had a DAS score of 104 or above); (c) low quality (both scored below 104 on the DAS); and (d) unstable marriages. Couples were placed in the unstable category if they reported being separated, divorced, or annulled at the follow-up. These categories were the building blocks for developing different grouping strategies.

Discriminant Function Analyses

Discriminant function analyses were used to assess the predictive validity of FOCCUS with marital quality as the dependent variable and percent couple agreement scores for each FOCCUS topic as the predictor variables. Percent couple agreement scores represent the percentage of questions within a topic area on which both partners agreed with the preferred response. (Response categories for FOCCUS are agree, disagree, or uncertain .) Except where noted, the percent couple agreement scores were entered simultaneously as predictor variables into the discriminant function analyses.

Many of the couples in the sample had non-Catholic partners and therefore had an additional percent couple agreement score for interfaith marriages. Interfaith and religion scores were combined into a single score through averaging. Some couples also had an additional percent couple agreement score for second marriages. Second marriage scores were excluded from the analyses because they could not be combined with another comparable scale and the number of second marriages was very small.

The data were examined to determine if any multivariate assumptions necessary for the discriminant function analyses were violated. For example, bivariate plots were examined to confirm a linear relationship among all predictor variables. In some analyses the Box-M scores were statistically significant, suggesting either the variance-covariance matrices were not equal or the multivariate normality assumption was violated. However, analyses run with transformed predictor variables to remove univariate and multivariate outliers all had nonsignificant Box-M scores. Analyses with and without transformed predictor variables yielded essentially the same results. Therefore, the results appear to be robust with regard to assumptions of multivariate normality, homogeneity of the variance-covariance matrices, and the presence of univariate or multivariate outliers. The results reported here are based on analyses in which no transformations were made.

Tabachnick and Fidell (1983) state that the sample size of the smallest group should exceed the number of predictors. This required that couples with unstable marriages be pooled with couples with low quality marriages: Although it would have been preferable to treat these groups separately, this was not a major problem conceptually since both groups could be collectively labeled as having poor quality marriages.

RESULTS

High Quality Versus Poor Quality

A discriminant function analysis was run to predict high quality versus poor quality marriages based on DAS scores. Couples with mixed quality (n = 44), low quality (n = 13), and unstable marriages (n = 8) were pooled together to form the poor quality marriage group. Mixed quality marriages were put into the poor quality group based on the rationale that a marriage is of poor quality whether one or both partners perceive the marriage to be in trouble.

Table 2 shows the breakdown for the number of couples correctly and incorrectly classified in each category.(Table 2 omitted) Overall, 67.6% of the couples were

correctly classified in terms of marital quality. The canonical correlation was a modest .391. The Wilk's lambda was .847, which corresponded to a chi-square value of 33.00 (df = 13; p =.0017).

Additionally, Table 3 shows that all but one of the FOCCUS topic areas, marriage covenant, had a significant F ratio ($p < .05$) and had a loading of .30 or more on the structure matrix.(Table 3 omitted) (Note: With multivariate functions, the loading for any one variable depends on its correlation with the other variables and therefore should not be considered separately from the other variables.) These findings provide additional support for the predictive validity of FOCCUS since all but one of the topic areas loaded on the discriminant function and had a significant F ratio.

Three Groups-High Versus Mined Versus Low/Unstable

The predictive validity of FOCCUS was also tested with mixed quality marriages treated as a separate group rather than pooled with unstable and low quality marriages. The first discriminant function yielded a canonical correlation of .43 1 and a Wilk's lambda of .762 (chi sup 2 = 5 3.87; df = 1 3; p = .001 1). The second discriminant function yielded a canonical correlation of .253 and a Wilk's lambda of .936 (chi sup 2 = 13.13; df = 13; p = .3596). No benefit was gained in terms of the overall classification rate by treating the mixed couple category separately. In fact, the overall classification rate dropped from 67.6% to 58.4% when mixed quality marriages were treated separately. However, treating mixed marriages separately did improve the ability of FOCCUS to identify at-risk marriages (which is discussed in more detail in a later section).

Effect of Scoring Method on Predictive Validity

A different method of calculating percent couple agreement scores was examined to see if it would improve the predictive validity of FOCCUS. The scoring method used by the developers of FOCCUS marks a question as a disagreement if either individual marks anything (including uncertain or blank responses) other than the preferred response. This approach was compared with a less conservative scoring strategy where individuals were not penalized for uncertain or blank responses (based on the rationale that these responses do not necessarily reflect disagreement with the preferred response).

Using the second or less conservative scoring method improved the classification rates for the discriminant function analyses regardless of whether mixed quality marriages were treated separately or pooled with unstable and low quality marriages. When the mixed quality marriages were pooled with unstable and low quality marriages, the overall classification rate increased from 67.6% to 73.9% using the less conservative scoring method. When mixed quality marriages were treated separately, the overall classification increased from 58.4% to 64.7%.

McNemar's repeated measures chi-square test for change (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983, p. 328) was used to see if the improvements in classification rates were statistically significant. In neither case was the chi-square significant using .05 criteria. However, it is

uncertain whether the lack of statistical significance means that the differences are simply due to sampling error (a 12-14% probability based on the p-values) or that the effect is real but is statistically nonsignificant because of the small number of cases utilized in McNemar's test. (The test is based only on those cases that are correctly classified by one strategy and incorrectly classified using the other strategy.)

Identifying Couples At Risk

Implicit in the reporting of overall classification rates is that errors in classifying high quality marriages should be weighted the same as errors in classifying poor quality marriages. However, one could argue that these errors have different consequences and therefore should not carry the same weight. In one case, FOCCUS scores may incorrectly predict that a couple will have a successful marriage when in fact they will not.

This error carries significant consequences since the couple will not get additional counseling which may help prevent the relationship from becoming distressed. Another type of error will occur if a couple is recommended for additional counseling based on their FOCCUS results when in fact the couple's relationship would be successful without the additional counseling. Assuming the counseling would strengthen an already strong relationship (or at least not be harmful to the couple), it would appear that this error carries a less serious consequence than incorrectly predicting a couple will have a successful marriage. Therefore, discriminant function analyses were evaluated on their ability to correctly identify at-risk couples (those couples in which one or both partners scored below the DAS cutoff of 104 or who later became separated, annulled, or divorced).

Treating mixed quality marriages as a separate group rather than pooling them with unstable and low quality marriages improved the classification rate of at-risk couples from 60% to 68%. Since both mixed and low/unstable couples are considered to be at risk, incorrectly classifying mixed couples as low/unstable couples, or low/unstable couples as mixed couples did not affect the proportion of at-risk couples correctly identified.

Using the less conservative method for scoring also improved the ability of FOCCUS to identify at-risk couples. Using the less conservative scoring method (with mixed quality marriages pooled with unstable and low quality marriages) improved the classification rate of at-risk couples from 60% to 69%.

McNemar's repeated measures chi-square test for change (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983, p. 328) was used to determine if either improvement in classifying at-risk couples was statistically significant. Although the 8 and 9 percentage point improvement appears to be meaningful, neither was found to be statistically significant (at the .05 level). As stated earlier, it is uncertain whether the differences in classification rates are simply due to sampling error or whether the effect is real but statistically nonsignificant due to the small number of cases that are reclassified in each analysis.

Treating mixed quality marriages as a separate group in combination with using the less conservative scoring method was most effective in correctly identifying at-risk couples. The combination of these two factors improved the classification rate of at-risk couples from 60% to 75%. McNemar's test revealed the difference in classification rates to be statistically significant (chi sup 2 = 7.58, df = 1, p <.01).

The results suggest that couples in which one partner is at risk for marital dissatisfaction may be somewhat different from couples in which both partners are at risk for marital dissatisfaction. However, this finding is very tentative given the lack of statistical significance. The less conservative scoring method also appears as a promising lead, but again conclusions must remain very tentative given the lack of statistical significance. In both cases, the results need to be validated on another sample to confirm that they are not simply artifacts of sampling error.

Comparison with PREPARE

A comparison between the predictive validity of FOCCUS and PREPARE was made. Numerous methodological differences between the PREPARE and FOCCUS studies prevent a direct comparison. For example, couples in the PREPARE studies (Fowers & Olson, 1986; Larsen & Olson, 1989) were married only 2 to 3 years in contrast to couples in the FOCCUS study who were married 4 to 5 years. Another important difference is that it was necessary to pool the unstable and low quality marriages in the FOCCUS analyses to insure that the smallest group was larger than the number of predictor variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1993). In the PREPARE studies, the low quality marriages and divorced marriages were analyzed separately. Also, PREPARE studies used ENRICH to measure marital quality instead of the DAS.

Despite these differences, it is possible to judge whether FOCCUS and PREPARE are roughly comparable in terms of their predictive validity. To minimize methodological differences, the mixed couple group was eliminated from the FOCCUS analyses to match the PREPARE studies in which only extreme groups (high vs. low quality marriages) were compared. Both direct and stepwise discriminant function analyses were run with FOCCUS scores since both approaches were used in the PREPARE studies.

The results in Table 4 suggest that the two instruments are comparable in terms of their predictive validity.(Table 4 omitted) The classification rates for PREPARE were between 73% and 74% in the original study by Fowers and Olson (1986) and between 84% and 85% in the later study by Larsen and Olson (1989). The classification rates for FOCCUS were between 80% and 82% and are clearly within the range of classification rates for the two PREPARE studies.

The results also indicate that using extreme group comparisons inflates classification rates. Specifically, when couples with mixed quality marriages are included in the analysis, the overall classification rate was only 67.6%. However, excluding couples with mixed quality marriages dramatically increased the overall classification rate to 79-80%. Therefore, the predictive validity percentages quoted for PREPARE are probably also

inflated and do not reflect the instrument's true predictive validity when applied to all couples.

DISCUSSION

The key goal of the research was to assess the predictive validity of FOCCUS. Specifically, would FOCCUS scores during engagement predict a couple's future marital success 4 to 5 years later? FOCCUS scores were able to predict successfully in 67.6% to 73.9% of the cases (depending upon the scoring method used) the couples with high quality marriages versus those with poor quality marriages. It was also demonstrated that FOCCUS scores could be used to identify 75% of the couples who later developed distressed marriages.

The classification rates support the conclusion that FOCCUS does have good predictive validity. Additionally, couples with high quality marriages had higher subscale scores than couples with poor quality marriages in all topic areas. These differences were statistically significant in 12 out of the 13 subscales, providing additional empirical support for the predictive validity of FOCCUS.

Although FOCCUS does have good predictive validity, it is not error free in its predictions. Even using the less conservative scoring method, slightly over a quarter of the couples were inaccurately classified. The modest classification rate is not totally unexpected since correlations between predictor and criterion variables are generally modest due to the complexity of human nature (Nunnally, 1978, p. 90). For example, several postmarital factors (e.g., stressful life events, receiving therapy) could significantly alter later marital outcomes. In fact, given the complexity of human nature, relationships, and life, it is perhaps surprising that any instrument could do better than chance in predicting marital success 4 to 5 years later.

However, the fact that FOCCUS is not error free in its predictions is an important reminder that the FOCCUS instrument should not be used as a sing]e, infallible predictor of future marital success. Although FOCCUS can be used to help identify couples who may be at risk for developing marital distress, both the couple and the counselor need to understand that FOCCUS results are not infallible and should not be viewed as a "pass-fail" test. The FOCCUS results should be one of several pieces of information the couple and the counselor weigh in assessing the potential of the future marital relationship.

It is important to note that the predictive validity of FOCCUS has been demonstrated for a particular time frame--4 to 5 years. It is uncertain what impact choosing this time frame had on the predictive validity of FOCCUS. It is possible that FOCCUS might have had a greater predictive ability if a shorter time frame had been selected (e.g., 2 years) since postmarital factors probably become more important predictors of marital success relative to premarital factors as time passes. However, it is also possible that choosing a longer time frame (e.g., 7-10 years) might have improved the predictive ability of FOCCUS since some of the high quality marriages that FOCCUS classified as being at risk might deteriorate with more time. An interesting study would be to follow the predictive

validity of FOCCUS longitudinally. This might give some insight into how long premarital factors are predictive of future marital success.

A comparison of FOCCUS and PREPARE suggests that they are similar in terms of their predictive validity. This is not a surprising result since there are some similarities between the two instruments in terms of the topics or issues they address. Numerous methodological differences between the FOCCUS and PREPARE studies prevent one from making a more definitive statement on which instrument has better predictive validity. PREPARE and FOCCUS will need to be tested in a single study to make such a statement. However, there may be limited value in such a study since the predictive validity of both instruments has already been demonstrated.

A key next step would be to cross-validate the findings by testing the predictive validity of FOCCUS on another sample. Since the present study was composed primarily of Roman Catholic couples from the Midwest, the new sample should include a large number of Roman Catholic couples outside the Midwest to confirm the generalizability of the findings.

It would also be helpful to test the predictive validity of FOCCUS with non-Catholic couples (perhaps using the nondenominational version) to confirm its applicability to an even broader population. In either case, it would be ideal to include a larger number of separated, divorced, and annulled couples in future studies to see if the predictive validity of FOCCUS was altered by treating poor quality marriages separately from unstable marriages.

Finally, additional research could explore whether a better rate of predicting marital success can be achieved by combining FOCCUS scores with other possible predictor variables. FOCCUS scores in combination with other predictors could potentially enhance our ability to identify couples at risk for distressed marriages.

REFERENCES

Crane, D. R., Allgood, S. M., Larson, J. H., & Griffin, W. (1990). Assessing marital quality with distressed and nondistressed couples: A comparison and equivalency table for three frequently used measures. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 52, 87-93.

Dillman, D. A. (1978). Mail and telephone surveys: A total design method. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Fournier, D. G., Olson, D. H., & Druckman, J. M. (1983). Assessing marital and premarital relationships: The PREPARE-ENRICH inventories. In E. E. Filsinger (Ed.), Marriage and family assessment (pp. 229-250). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Fowers, B. J., & Olson. D. H. (1986). Predicting marital success with PREPARE: A predictive validity study. Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 12, 403-413.

Glick, P. (1984). Marriage, divorce, and living arrangements: Prospective changes. Journal of Family Issues, 5(1), 7-26.

Jacobson, N. S., Follette, W. C., & Revenstorf, D. (1984). Psychotherapy outcome research: Methods for reporting variability and evaluating clinical significance. Behavior Therapy, 15, 336-352.

Larsen, A. S., & Olson, D. H. (1989). Predicting marital satisfaction using PREPARE: A replication study. Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 15, 311-322.

National Center for Health Statistics. (1990). Advance report of final divorce statistics, 1987. Monthly Vital Statistics Report, 38(12), supplemental 2.

Nunnally, J. C. (1978). Psychometric theory. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Olson, D. H. (1983). How effective is marriage preparation? In D. R. Mace (Ed.), Prevention in family services: Approaches to family wellness (pp. 65-75). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Raschke, H. J. (1987). Divorce. In M. B. Sussman & S. K. Steinmetz (Eds.), Handbook of marriage and the family (pp. 597-624). New York: Plenum.

Spanier, G. B. (1976). Measuring dyadic adjustment: New scales for assessing the quality of marriage and similar dyads. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 38, 15-28.

Stahmann, R. F., & Hiebert, W. J. (1987). Premarital counseling: The professionals handbook (2nd ed.). Lexington, MA: Lexington.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (1983). Using multivariate statistics. New York: Harper & Row.

ENDNOTE

For more information about FOCCUS, contact the Family Life Office, 3214 North 60th Street, Omaha, NE 68104.

Lee Williams, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Marriage, Family, and Child Counseling at the University of San Diego, School of Education, San Diego, CA 92110.

Joan Jurich, PhD, is Associate Professor of Family Studies at Purdue University, 1269 CDFS, West Lafayette, IN 47907.