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Article

## Practical Guidelines and Recommendations for Improving the Preparation of Psychological Expert Reports Within the Spanish Legal Framework

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### ABSTRACT

The forensic psychological report is a key element in communication between the expert and legal professionals, serving as a critical piece of evidence in the administration of justice. Its preparation involves technical and ethical challenges, particularly due to insufficient legal regulation and limited empirical research. Through a narrative review of the literature, this paper synthesizes practical guidelines to improve both formal and substantive aspects of forensic psychological reports in Spain. It identifies common errors, proposes an organizational model, and offers key strategies for writing, to enhance the report's clarity and evidentiary value.

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## Orientaciones Prácticas y Propuestas de Mejora Para la Elaboración del Informe Pericial Psicológico en el Contexto Legal Español

### RESUMEN

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**Palabras clave**

Informe psicológico forense

Estructura del informe

Erros comunes

Estándares éticos

Claves de redacción

El informe psicológico forense es un elemento esencial en la comunicación entre el perito y los operadores jurídicos, constituyendo un medio probatorio relevante en la administración de justicia. Su elaboración presenta retos técnicos y deontológicos, especialmente por la insuficiente regulación legal y la escasa investigación empírica existente. A través de una revisión narrativa de la literatura especializada, este trabajo sintetiza orientaciones prácticas para mejorar aspectos formales y sustanciales del informe psicológico forense en España, identificando errores frecuentes, proponiendo un modelo de organización y claves para la redacción a fin de favorecer su comprensión y utilidad probatoria.

Historically, forensic psychology has evolved from its initial expert applications in Europe and the United States in the late 19th century to become a consolidated discipline, recognized for its contribution to the judicial process (Muñoz et al., 2024; Wolffram, 2020).

The forensic psychological report is a fundamental tool in the judicial process, acting as a link between specialized knowledge of psychology and legal demands (Grisso, 2010; Melton et al., 2018). Through the report, the expert communicates the results of their evaluation to the judicial body, substantiates their conclusions, and offers scientific criteria that contribute to the resolution of issues relevant to the case. In addition, the report is the central element for the evaluation of expert evidence by judges and courts (Neal et al., 2022). Therefore, the effectiveness of expert assistance to the administration of justice depends largely on its clarity, structure, and reasoning (DeMier & Otto, 2017; Grisso, 2010; Zwartz, 2018).

Despite the importance of expert reports, scientific research has paid little attention to the key factors involved in their preparation or their importance in professional training programs (da Silva, Casoni & Costa, 2014). In general, it is noted that experts have been guided mainly by compliance with legal, procedural, and ethical standards rather than by solid guidelines derived from research (Goodman-Delahunty & Dhami, 2013). Moreover, authors such as DeMier and Krauss (2023) have criticized the lack of empirical support for the recommendations found in the literature on the preparation of psychological expert reports.

This situation has led to enormous variability in the quality, format, content, and writing of reports, depending largely on the training, experience, and individual criteria of the professional (Vredeveldt et al., 2022). As Karson and Nadkarni (2013) warned, many experts develop their own writing styles, which are far removed from professional recommendations and principles of good practice. Furthermore, it has been noted that there are few opportunities for forensic psychology professionals to receive feedback on the quality of their reports (Goodman-Delahunty & Dhami, 2013).

Through the limited empirical research available on the preparation of forensic psychological reports, both formal errors (in structure and writing) and substantive errors have been observed. It has been warned that illogical or inconsistent structuring, poor or ambiguous writing, lack of transparency regarding the evaluation process followed, and insufficiently substantiated conclusions not only diminish the usefulness of the report, but can also compromise informed and appropriate judicial decisions and, in addition, can lead to sanctions for the professional (da Silva, Casoni & Costa, 2014; Grisso 2010; Goodman-Delahunty & Dhami, 2013).

A cross-cutting aspect of the entire expert evaluation process-and therefore one that also affects the preparation of the expert report-is the management of cognitive biases. The literature has documented that experts are exposed to biases inherent in human nature, context, culture, and experience, as well as those specific to the case at hand, which can affect decision-making during the evaluation process and the preparation of the report (Lubit, 2021; Zapf & Dror, 2017). In this regard, authors such as Neal et al. (2022) recommend including bias detection and management strategies in the report.

In Spain, although procedural rules (Ley de Enjuiciamiento Criminal [Criminal Procedure Act], 1882; Ley de Enjuiciamiento

Civil [Civil Procedure Act], 2000) establish general principles such as objectivity and impartiality of expert evidence, there are few specific regulations determining the structure, content, and technical standards that forensic psychological reports must meet. The few studies carried out in our country, mainly in the field of family expert reports, have also detected deficiencies in the preparation of reports. For example, in Catalán's study (2015), 30% of the reports analyzed were below average in terms of the quality criteria applied, and 20% issued conclusions that were disconnected from the data derived from the investigation.

The lack of regulations and standardization has important practical implications. First, it hinders the critical assessment of the report by legal practitioners, who are faced with documents of very different styles and qualities. Second, it increases the possibility of errors in judicial interpretation, which may affect the guarantee of fundamental rights such as the presumption of innocence, procedural equality, or the right to effective judicial protection. Third, it compromises the public image of forensic psychology, affecting its legitimacy as an auxiliary discipline of justice (Goodman-Delahunty & Dhami, 2013; Zwartz, 2018).

Given this situation, it is important to move towards a systematization of the preparation of forensic psychological reports, based on international best practices and adapted to the Spanish legal and professional reality. A logical and coherent structure, a detailed description of the evaluation process followed, and clear and simple wording not only facilitate the understanding and judicial assessment of the report, but also protect the rights of the parties involved, reinforce the image of psychology as a forensic science, and improve the efficiency of the justice system (Sociedad Española de Psicología Jurídica y Forense [Spanish Society of Legal and Forensic Psychology], 2024).

## Objective

The aim of this article is to analyze, integrate, and synthesize practical guidelines from the scientific literature in order to offer useful guidelines for improving the formal and substantive aspects of the preparation of forensic psychological reports within the Spanish legal framework.

## Method

This work is based on a narrative review of national and international literature and Spanish legal regulations related to the preparation of forensic psychological reports.

The narrative design used involves inherent limitations, such as the absence of strict criteria for evaluating the methodological quality of sources or the possibility of selection bias. Nevertheless, the narrative review constitutes a recognized method for synthesizing and critically analyzing available knowledge in a study area when the objective is not statistical quantification of results but rather the theoretical and practical integration of findings (Ferrari, 2015). This approach enables a flexible and appropriate critical integration for offering practical recommendations in a field where the diversity of approaches hinders the application of strictly systematic methods (Greenhalgh et al., 2018).

The sources used were located through searches in different specialized databases, such as PsycINFO, Scopus, and Web of

Science, supplemented by searches in Google Scholar. The review included scientific articles, book chapters, professional guides, codes of ethics, regulatory documents, and standardization proposals published between 2014 and 2024. Priority was given to sources from peer-reviewed journals and recognized professional bodies, such as the Australian Psychological Society, the British Psychological Society, and the Sociedad Española de Psicología Jurídica y Forense [Spanish Society of Legal and Forensic Psychology]. **Table 1** describes the details of the works that were ultimately analyzed.

**Table 1**  
Works Analyzed

Authors	Type of document
Allan & Grisso (2014)	Review article
Arch (2023)	Book chapter
Australian Psychological Society (2019)	Consensus guide
Brodsky & Pope (2023)	Review article
Bush, Conell & Denney (2020)	Manual
Carrasco & Ramírez (2020)	Book chapter
Da Silva, Casoni & Costa (2014)	Empirical article
DeMier & Krauss (2023)	Book chapter
DeMier & Otto (2017)	Review article
Kukor, Otto & Veltri (2024)	Review article
Lubit (2021)	Review article
Moulin & Delacausaz (2022)	Review article
Neal et al. (2022)	Review article
Nordgreen (2024)	Review article
Rocchio (2020)	Review article
Shapiro (2016)	Review article
Sociedad Española de Psicología Jurídica y Forense [Spanish Society of Legal and Forensic Psychology] (2024)	Consensus guide
The British Psychological Society (2021)	Consensus guide
Vredeveldt et al. (2022)	Review article
Young (2016)	Review article
Zwartz (2018)	Review article

Relevant legislative documents were also reviewed, mainly the [Spanish Criminal Procedure Act \(1882\)](#) and the [Civil Procedure Act \(2000\)](#), as well as recent proposals such as the [Draft Criminal Procedure Act \(2020\)](#).

The source selection process adhered to the following inclusion criteria: (a) the studies addressed aspects related to report writing from a technical and/or ethical point of view; (b) they were based on evidence or broad professional consensus; (c) they were applicable to the Spanish context or could be reasonably extrapolated from similar international contexts. Documents focused exclusively on other types of psychological reports (e.g., clinical, educational, or occupational) were excluded, unless they offered guidelines that could be extrapolated to forensic practice, as were documents that, although based on aspects of the expert evaluation process, did not specifically address report preparation.

The selected documents were analyzed qualitatively, extracting the main recommendations regarding the ethical principles applicable to the preparation of psychological expert reports, strategies for detecting and correcting errors repeatedly identified in forensic practice, and proposals for guidelines for the structure, drafting, and content of the report. This strategy made it possible to integrate existing theoretical and empirical information at the international level with the practical needs of professional practice in the Spanish judicial system.

## Results

### Ethical Principles Applicable to the Preparation of Forensic Psychological Reports

The practice of forensic psychology takes place in a particularly complex ethical environment, which requires careful adaptation of the general principles of the discipline to the specificities of the legal field (Allan & Grisso, 2014; Arch, 2023; Bush, Connell & Denney, 2020). In this context, the quality of the expert report is not only a technical requirement but also a fundamental component of the professional's ethical responsibility (Australian Psychological Society, 2019; The British Psychological Society, 2021; Neal et al., 2022; Nordgreen, 2024; Rocchio, 2020; Shapiro, 2016; Sociedad Española de Psicología Jurídica y Forense, 2024).

According to Allan and Grisso (2014), the specific ethical aspects related to the preparation of forensic psychological reports can be structured around four guiding principles: responsibility, integrity, respect for the individuals being assessed, and justice:

#### Responsibility

This principle involves acting with technical competence and methodological rigor, anticipating and minimizing the risks arising from a possible misinterpretation of the report. The clarity, coherence, and structure of the document are, in this sense, direct expressions of this ethical responsibility (Young, 2016). The professional must ensure that the report is understandable to legal practitioners, without sacrificing accuracy or conceptual depth (Allan & Grisso, 2014).

#### Integrity

Integrity requires that the forensic psychologist have adequate training and experience in expert assessment, and that the report comprehensively and thoroughly reflect the evaluation process followed. The presentation of findings must be objective, accurate, and free from distortion, intentional omission, or ambiguous wording (Allan & Grisso, 2014; Neal et al., 2022; Nordgreen, 2024; Young, 2016). This principle also requires explicitly stating the psychometric properties of the instruments used (reliability and validity indices), acknowledging the limitations of the assessment, clearly differentiating between data and inferences, and refraining from making categorical judgments that are unfounded or exceed the scope of their professional competence (Nordgreen, 2024; Vredeveldt et al., 2022; Young, 2016). An area that is particularly sensitive to this principle is the preparation of counter-reports, which should focus exclusively on technical aspects, be based on solid scientific foundations, and maintain absolute independence from the requesting party (Arch, 2023).

#### Respect for the Persons Evaluated

Respect for the dignity, privacy, and autonomy of individuals assessed must govern all expert actions, even though there is no therapeutic alliance in this context. The professional must ensure an informed, respectful intervention that is proportionate to the judicial purpose of the evaluation (DeMier & Otto, 2017; Nordgreen,

2024). This includes adequately informing about confidentiality limits and the forensic psychologist's role, as well as ensuring that the report contains only information relevant to the purpose of the assessment, preserving the privacy of the person being assessed (Allan & Grisso, 2014; Young, 2016). Furthermore, the use of psychological terms that could negatively influence the court's perception of the person being evaluated should be avoided (Allan & Grisso, 2014; Arch, 2023).

### **Justice**

The principle of justice requires that the report be transparent, accessible, and understandable to all actors in the judicial process. The use of unnecessary technicalities that may constitute a barrier to its proper interpretation and critical assessment should be avoided (Allan & Grisso, 2014; Young, 2016). An excessively technical, ambiguous, or opaque report may violate the right to defense, compromising the fairness of the judicial process.

### **Legal Requirements in the Spanish Context**

As indicated, Spanish law provides general guidelines for the preparation of expert reports. However, although both the Criminal Procedure Act (1882) and the Civil Procedure Law (2000) establish principles such as objectivity and impartiality, they offer few details regarding the content and formal structure required of expert reports (Abel et al., 2019).

This lack of specific guidelines means that the quality of expert reports depends, to a large extent, on the training and professional judgment of the person who prepares them. This situation increases the risk of reports being submitted that do not meet the minimum quality standards required for their content to have probative value in court (Muñoz et al., 2024).

In this context, the *Anteproyecto de Ley de Enjuiciamiento Criminal [Draft Criminal Procedure Bill]* (2020) represents a significant step forward, as it proposes the incorporation of minimum requirements for expert reports, such as clearly stating the object of the expertise, a description of the methodology used—including its scientific basis—and the logical reasoning behind the conclusions reached. However, this regulatory framework is still pending approval and, therefore, its practical application has not yet materialized.

### **Common Errors in the Preparation of Forensic Psychological Reports**

A review of the specialized literature reveals that certain errors are recurrent in expert practice. Below is a detailed list of those most frequently cited by different authors:

- Lack of structure in the report (da Silva, Casoni & Costa, 2014; Moulin & Delacausaz, 2022).
- Unsubstantiated technical opinions or lack of transparency in the reasoning process followed by the expert (Da Silva, Casoni & Costa, 2014; Lubit, 2021; Moulin & Delacausaz, 2022).
- Misuse of data from scientific literature or inappropriate application of such data to the specific case (Lubit, 2021).

- Lack of clarity regarding the expert request (Moulin & Delacausaz, 2022).
- Absence of information on the technical characteristics of the instruments used (Carrasco & Ramírez, 2020).
- Absence of important conditions of the assessment that may affect the results, for example, whether an interpreter was used, whether there were third parties listening or observing, or whether there were unusual distractors (Brodsy & Pope, 2023).
- Mechanical interpretation of test scores without taking into account the body of information handled and the individuality of the case (Carrasco & Ramírez, 2020; da Silva, Casoni & Costa, 2014).
- Failure to differentiate between data and inferences (Moulin & Delacausaz, 2022).
- Lack of connection between the data collected during the assessment and the legal issue to be resolved (da Silva, Casoni & Costa, 2014).
- Use of overly technical or ambiguous language (da Silva, Casoni & Costa, 2014; Moulin & Delacausaz, 2022; Carrasco & Ramírez, 2020).
- Omission of relevant or contradictory information (Moulin & Delacausaz, 2022).
- Absence of potential sources of bias and strategies to mitigate them, if any were used (Neal et al., 2022).
- Adherence to the structure or format of the clinical report (Kukor, Otto & Veltri, 2024).
- Preparation of excessively long reports (Brodsy & Pope, 2023; Kukor, Otto & Veltri, 2024).
- Preparation of "standard reports" for the same subjects of expert evaluation, including self-plagiarism of previous reports, disregarding the specific information of each case and suggesting preconceived conclusions (Brodsy & Pope, 2023).
- Formulation of expert considerations in categorical, definitive, and unreserved terms, using words such as "always," "absolutely," "unequivocally," "without a doubt," etc. (Brodsy & Pope, 2023).
- Inappropriate formulation of conclusions where the professional decides on the inherent legal issue, when this is the exclusive competence of the judge or court (Young, 2016).

These errors not only compromise the quality of the report, but also increase its vulnerability to possible legal challenges, which can lead to serious legal consequences, including the dismissal of expert evidence and even disciplinary proceedings or civil claims against the expert.

### **Recommendations on the Structure of the Forensic Psychological Report**

Several authors (Brodsy & Pope, 2023; Moulin & Delacausaz, 2022; Neal et al., 2022; Vredeveldt et al., 2022; Young, 2016; Zwartz, 2018) have highlighted the importance of forensic psychological reports following a logical, coherent, and cohesive structure. Most proposals agree on the advisability of organizing the content of the report into at least three clearly defined sections:

## **Identification Section**

### **Expert Details**

The report must include the identification details of the professional responsible for the report, as well as their training and specific experience in the field of forensic psychology. In cases where the report is prepared jointly, the contribution and qualifications of each professional involved must be specified.

### **Applicant's Details**

Identification of the person or entity requesting the expert assessment.

### **Case Details and Subject Matter of the Expert Assessment**

Description of the case, with particular attention to the clear and precise definition of the issues to be assessed.

### **Methodology Used**

Details of the techniques, instruments, and sources of information used. It is essential to report whether the instruments used have limitations in terms of reliability or validity, whether their use does not comply with best practices, or whether they have been applied in an unconventional manner or for purposes other than those originally intended. Likewise, the conditions under which the evaluation was carried out must be recorded, especially if these could have influenced the results (e.g., use of an interpreter, recording of sessions, presence of third parties, or existence of distractions).

## **Descriptive Section**

### **Presentation of Data**

An organized and concise presentation of the relevant data collected during the evaluation. This section should be structured into different thematic sections, making a clear distinction between the data obtained, their sources, and their interpretation. It is essential that legal practitioners are able to differentiate between what is known and can be accepted as evidence, and what constitutes a hypothesis or professional interpretation subject to evaluation. If relevant information could not be accessed, this limitation must be explicitly stated in the report.

## **Technical Section**

### **Analysis and Integration of Results and Formulation of Conclusions**

This section should include a critical discussion of the findings, considering alternative hypotheses and potential contradictory data. It should integrate the scientific literature used as the basis for interpretation, as well as the logical reasoning supporting the conclusions. The explicit linkage between results, empirical evidence, and epistemological foundations enables

legal operators to access the sources backing the professional judgment issued and facilitates an informed evaluation of the expert content.

Regarding the formulation of conclusions, it is advisable that they be stated in numbered form and provide an explicit response to the questions posed as the object of evaluation. Additionally, they must be substantiated, argued, and demonstrable—that is, technically defensible before a court. In this regard, it is emphasized that their scope and limitations should be included.

Finally, some authors (e.g., [Zwartz, 2018](#)) suggest introducing a section of appendices containing documents such as informed consent, clarification of the professional role and confidentiality limits, profiles of the tests administered, or any relevant reports consulted.

## **Report Writing**

With regard to report writing, various authors ([Neal et al., 2022](#); [Moulin & Delacausaz, 2022](#); [Kukor, Otto & Veltri, 2024](#); [Young, 2016](#)) offer recommendations that suggest adhering to the following principles:

- Principle of clarity: avoid technical jargon, ambiguous, or vague terms.
- Principle of conciseness: include only relevant information, as the inclusion of irrelevant information may increase the risk of bias, violate the privacy of those assessed, and make the report difficult to understand.
- Principle of accuracy: ensure precision and clarity when conveying results from quantitative instruments (psychometric tests, actuarial tools, etc.), as this may affect the evaluation made by legal practitioners.
- Principle of neutrality: take special care in the tone used in the wording, avoiding, for example, an emotional and/or critical tone.
- Principle of humanity: it is recommended to include, without excess, direct quotes from the individuals assessed. This, in turn, will help illustrate and support some technical considerations.
- Principle of prudence: categorical or absolute terms that are difficult to substantiate with current scientific knowledge should be avoided.

In addition to the above guidelines, it is recommended to use checklists as a support tool to ensure the completeness and consistency of the report ([Zwartz, 2018](#)). These lists allow the expert to self-assess the presence of all critical elements before submitting the report, minimizing the likelihood of inadvertent errors (see [Table 2](#)).

The implementation of peer review protocols within forensic evaluation services is another effective strategy for improving the quality of reports ([Bordsky & Pope, 2004](#); [Lubit, 2021](#); [Vredeveldt et al., 2022](#)), as external reviews enable the detection of inconsistencies, biases, or errors that might go unnoticed by the author of the report. In this regard, [Moulin & Delacausaz \(2022\)](#) suggest that exchange and feedback of legal practitioners, as recipients of expert reports, could also be of interest in improving the preparation of these reports.

**Table 2**  
Checklist for Reviewing Psychological Expert Reports

Control questions	
Regarding the professional role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did you make your role clear in relation to the individuals evaluated or other sources of collateral information?</li> <li>Is there a possibility of a dual relationship or other ethical violation?</li> <li>Have you clarified the purpose of the report with the person being evaluated?</li> <li>Have you clarified the limits of confidentiality with the person being evaluated?</li> <li>Have you obtained informed consent?</li> <li>Have you included the above aspects in the report?</li> <li>Are you familiar with the relevant legislation and case law?</li> </ul>
Regarding the request for an expert opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the psycholegal question clear?</li> <li>If not, have you tried to obtain more information?</li> <li>If the above is not possible, have you indicated your interpretation of the psycholegal question and the points of the report?</li> </ul>
Regarding data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have alternative hypotheses been considered?</li> <li>Has all the information necessary to answer the question been obtained?</li> <li>Have you tried to gather collateral information?</li> <li>Are the personal details of the person being assessed and the dates of the assessment correct?</li> <li>Have multiple data sources been used?</li> <li>Are all the data sources used in the report listed?</li> <li>Are the sources of information in the report clear?</li> <li>Are the psychometric measures used appropriate?</li> </ul>
Regarding report writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you avoided the use of jargon, colloquial language, or biased language?</li> <li>Are there any terms that are not explained?</li> <li>Have data that are not relevant to answering the psycholegal question been excluded?</li> <li>Are the data and inferences expressed separately?</li> <li>Is the reasoning clear and the conclusions transparent?</li> <li>Have you avoided answering the legal question?</li> <li>Are the answers to the psycholegal questions clearly stated in the conclusions?</li> </ul>
Regarding personal aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there anything in this referral, assessment, or report that makes you uncomfortable?</li> <li>Would you be satisfied if the report were made public?</li> <li>Is there potential for personal bias?</li> <li>Have you only made considerations on matters for which you are qualified and competent?</li> </ul>

*Note.* Adapted from Zwart (2018)

Finally, it is essential to emphasize the need for ongoing training in forensic psychological report writing that addresses technical, ethical, and communicative aspects and is tailored to the real needs of the Spanish judicial system (Muñoz et al., 2024).

## Conclusions

The preparation of forensic psychological reports is a complex task that requires not only a solid technical mastery of assessment methodologies, but also a high level of competence in scientific communication and rigorous ethical training. Its relevance in the judicial sphere is indisputable: it contributes to the evidentiary assessment of psychologically and legally relevant issues, influences the decisions of judges and courts, and directly affects the fundamental rights of the individuals being assessed (DeMier &

Otto, 2017; Zwart, 2018). In this sense, the report cannot be reduced to a mechanical exercise or based on the uncritical use of standardized templates (Young, 2016).

The narrative review carried out has revealed significant shortcomings that affect both the formal and substantive aspects of the reports. The absence of specific legal regulation in the Spanish context, coupled with the lack of standardization in professional training and supervision, has led to considerable heterogeneity in the quality of the reports issued (Muñoz et al., 2024). This variability, as Karson and Nadkarni (2013) warn, reflects not only personal writing styles but also structural deficiencies that compromise the usefulness and validity of the expert evidence.

Ethical and deontological principles in psychology must be applied with particular care in the forensic context (Australian Psychological Society, 2019; The British Psychological Society, 2021; Neal et al., 2022; Rocchio, 2020; Shapiro, 2016; Sociedad Española de Psicología Jurídica y Forense, 2024). Technical competence, honesty, accuracy, and humility in the treatment of data, as well as respect for the individuals assessed, must be guiding principles in all expert activities (Allan & Grisso, 2014; Nordgreen, 2024; Young, 2016). An area that is particularly sensitive to these principles is that of counter-reports, whose improper use can harm the image of psychology as a rigorous and reliable forensic science (Arch, 2023).

The most frequent errors detected are not limited to formal aspects, such as confusing wording or incoherent organization, but also affect essential issues: the clear delimitation of the expert subject matter, the metric basis of the methodology used, the lack of connection between the data collected and the legal issue, or the omission of contradictory information (Carrasco & Ramírez, 2020; da Silva, Casoni & Costa, 2014; Moulin & Delacausaz, 2022). These deficiencies increase the risk of misinterpretation and can undermine fundamental rights such as effective judicial protection.

Among the most critical weaknesses is the lack of differentiation between the data collected and the evaluator's interpretive inferences. This confusion, according to Neal et al. (2022), compromises the transparency of the report and makes it difficult for the court to evaluate. At the same time, the lack of recognition of methodological limitations, far from strengthening the report, weakens it. Explicit reflection on the limits of the instruments, possible sources of error, and interpretive constraints is an indicator of scientific rigor and ethical commitment (Melton et al., 2018).

From a communication standpoint, the use of overly technical or ambiguous language can make the report difficult to understand and be interpreted as a lack of objectivity or an attempt to mask unsubstantiated assertions (Young, 2016; Brodsky & Pope, 2023). The wording should be clear, precise, neutral, and appropriate for the judicial audience, avoiding categorical or absolute expressions. The structure of the report should be coherent and allow for an orderly reading of the data, analysis, and conclusions (Abel et al., 2019).

Particularly problematic are lengthy reports without a clear focus, "template reports" with self-plagiarism that disregard the particularities of the case, and those based on the unquestionable authority of the expert, without explicit inferential reasoning (Brodsky & Pope, 2023).

In response to these shortcomings, various authors have proposed useful strategies to improve report quality. The adoption

of checklists ensures that all relevant aspects have been considered, reducing the likelihood of omissions and improving the internal consistency of the report (Moulin & Delacausaz, 2022; Zwartz, 2018). Likewise, fostering a culture of critical review through the implementation of peer review protocols-both institutional and independent-would help detect errors before the report is delivered (Lubit, 2021; Vredeveldt et al., 2022).

The management of cognitive biases also requires priority attention. Deliberate reflection on alternative hypotheses, the use of blind procedures, and the separation of data collection and interpretation have been identified as effective strategies for mitigating these biases (Lubit, 2021; Neal et al., 2022; Kukor, Otto & Veltre, 2024).

Initial and continuing training for forensic psychologists is an essential pillar for achieving these objectives. Graduate programs should include specific training in report writing, with supervised practice addressing not only technical aspects but also communication and ethical issues (DeMier & Otto, 2017; Neal et al., 2022). Continuing education should update professionals on international best practices, regulatory developments, and quality strategies.

A quality forensic psychological report is not only a technical imperative but also an ethical and social commitment. A clear, well-founded, and comprehensible document not only promotes fairer, evidence-based judicial decisions but also protects the rights of those being assessed and strengthens public confidence in forensic psychology as a professional discipline.

Finally, it is recommended that future research empirically evaluate the effectiveness of the improvement proposals found in the literature, both in terms of judicial understanding and probative value. It would also be relevant to develop practical tools that facilitate the standardization of forensic reports and promote training interventions focused on improving writing skills and bias management, with special attention to communicative appropriateness for the judicial audience.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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