Comparing the Validity of the RM2000 Scales and OGRS3 for Predicting Recidivism by Internet Sexual Offenders

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Abstract

This study examined the predictive validity of four actuarial risk assessment tools with sexual offenders convicted of Internet offenses in England and Wales. Risk Matrix 2000 scales (RM2000/s, RM2000/v, and RM2000/c) and Offender Group Reconviction Scale 3 were examined to establish their accuracy in predicting sexual, violent, sexual and violent, and general reoffending in a sample of 1,344 Internet offenders who had either started a community sentence or been released from prison into the community by March 2007. A modified version of RM2000/s was used. Rates of proven reoffending were examined at 1 year for the majority of the sample (n = 1,326), and 2 years (n = 994) for those for whom these data were available. Proven reoffending was defined as any caution or conviction for a new offense. Reoffending rates were very low among this sample, and three quarters of the sexual reoffending was Internet related. The results indicate that all four tools had moderate to very good predictive accuracy as measured using receiver operating characteristics statistics when used to predict the outcome they were designed to (areas under the curve between .67 and .87). The results were also examined for generalist sexual offenders (those who had both Internet-related and other sexual offenses in their offense history) and Internet specialists (those whose sexual offenses were only Internet related) separately. The very low reoffending rate of the Internet specialists made these comparisons difficult. Further research is required with larger sample sizes and longer follow-up periods before firm conclusions can be made regarding the accuracy of these tools with Internet offenders.