An Assessment of Long-Term Risk of Recidivism By Adult Sex Offenders: One Size Doesn’t fit All

1. Geneviève Parent
   1. University of Montreal, genevieve.parent.4@umontreal.ca

1. Jean-Pierre Guay
   1. University of Montreal

1. Raymond A. Knight
   1. Brandeis University

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Abstract
Numerous instruments are available to clinicians for evaluating sex offenders' reoffense risk. Although they have demonstrated effectiveness in predicting recidivism significantly better than unstructured clinical evaluation, little is known about their predictive accuracy in subgroups of sexual offenders or in the long term. This study was undertaken to evaluate the predictive accuracy of nine instruments (VRAG, SORAG, RRASOR, Static–99, Static–2002, RM2000, MnSOST–R, SVR–20, PCL–R) among three groups of sexual offenders across a 15-year follow-up period. The results indicate that these instruments yielded marginal to modest predictive accuracy for sexual recidivism. A more detailed study of aggressor subgroups indicated that in both the short and the long term, these instruments were more effective at predicting the sexual recidivism of child molesters and the violent and nonviolent recidivism of rapists. Finally, although mixed offenders sexually reoffend more often and more rapidly than do rapists or child molesters, firm conclusions cannot be drawn because of the small number of mixed offenders in the sample.

Comparison of Measures of Risk for Recidivism in Sexual Offenders

1. Jan Looman
   1. Regional Treatment Centre, Kingston, Canada

1. JeffreyAbracen
   1. Central District Parole Office, Canada

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Abstract
Data for both sexual and violent recidivism for the Static–99, Risk Matrix 2000 (RM 2000), Rapid Risk Assessment for Sex Offense Recidivism (RRASOR), and Static–2002 are reported for 419 released sexual offenders assessed at the Regional Treatment Centre Sexual Offender Treatment Program. Data are analyzed by offender type as well as the group as a whole. Overall, the Static–2002 performed best for both outcomes, although differences between measures were not significant. The one exception to this was the RRASOR, which overall performed poorly. For rapists, the Static–2002 performed best for sexual recidivism, and the Risk Matrix 2000 performed best for violent recidivism. None of the measures performed well in predicting recidivism for child molesters. The components of the Static–2002 were examined in a regression analysis predicting sexual recidivism. Persistence of Sexual Offending and Age at Release were the only significant predictors for the group as a whole and for rapists. For child molesters, only the Deviant Sexual Interests component was significant. Results are discussed in terms of the current debate concerning age and risk for reoffence.

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The Predictive Validity of a General Risk/Needs Assessment Inventory on Sexual Offender Recidivism and an Exploration of the Professional Override

1. **J. Stephen Wormith**
   1. University of Saskatchewan
2. **Sarah Hogg**
   1. University of Saskatchewan Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services of Ontario
3. **Lina Guzzo**
   1. Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services of Ontario

1. J. Stephen Wormith, Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK, Canada, S7N 5A5; e-mail: s.wormith@usask.ca.

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**Abstract**

This study examines the predictive validity of the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) on a sample of sexual offenders extracted from a large cohort of offenders and compares predictive validities with nonsexual offenders from the same cohort. The LS/CMI predicted sex offenders’ general recidivism, which occurred at a rate of 44.1%, with about the same accuracy as less frequently occurring violent (12.34%) and sexual recidivism (3.73%; AUC = .77, .74, and .74, respectively) and with nonsexual offenders. The study revealed that allowing assessors to override the numerically derived risk level with their professional judgment, a practice that increased risk level much more often than it decreased it, reduced the predictive validity of the scale and did so particularly for sex offenders by increasing risk excessively. An exploration of factors related to
these adjustments revealed that non-risk-related characteristics were used in judgments to modify risk ratings. Implications for policy and practice are considered.

The Utility of Risk Assessment Instruments for the Prediction of Recidivism in Sexual Homicide Perpetrators

1. Andreas Hill1
2. Martin Rettenberger1
3. Niels Habermann2
4. Wolfgang Berner1
5. Reinhard Eher3,4
6. Peer Briken1

1. University Medical Center Hamburg–Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany
2. SRH University of Applied Sciences Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
3. Federal Evaluation Centre for Violent and Sexual Offenders, Vienna, Austria
4. Ulm University Hospital, Ulm, Germany

1. Martin Rettenberger, Institute for Sex Research and Forensic Psychiatry, University Medical Center Hamburg–Eppendorf, Martinistraße 52, D–20246 Hamburg, Germany Email: m.rettenberger@uke.uni-hamburg.de

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Abstract

To examine the predictive accuracy of four well established risk assessment instruments (PCL–R, HCR–20, SVR–20, and Static–99) in an important subgroup of sexual offenders, these instruments were assessed retrospectively based on information from forensic psychiatric court reports in a sample of 90 released male sexual homicide offenders (out of an original sample of 166) in Germany. Follow-up information about criminal reconvictions after release were obtained from the federal criminal records. Total scores as well as subscales and single items of these risk assessment instruments did not predict sexual recidivism, and only some of them had moderate predictive power regarding nonsexual violent recidivism. Possible explanations for these unexpected results are the retrospective study design with missing information about influences during the long duration of detention and time after release, the small sample size as well as the possibility that the risk assessment instruments investigated were valid for general sex offender samples, but not for the particular subgroup of offenders with sexually motivated homicides.
Abstract

There has been considerable research on relative predictive accuracy (i.e., discrimination) in offender risk assessment (e.g., Are high-risk offenders more likely to reoffend than low-risk offenders?), but virtually no research on the accuracy or stability of absolute recidivism estimates (i.e., calibration). The current study aimed to fill this gap by examining absolute and relative risk estimates for certain Static sex offender assessment tools. Logistic regression coefficients for Static-99R and Static-2002R were combined through meta-analysis (8,106 sex offenders; 23 samples). The sexual recidivism rates for typical sex offenders are lower than the public generally believes. Static-99R and Static-2002R both demonstrated remarkably consistent relative predictive accuracy across studies. For both scales, however, the predicted recidivism rates within each risk score demonstrated large and significant variability across studies. The authors discuss how the variability in recidivism rates complicates the estimation of recidivism probability in applied assessments.
Abstract

Criterion-referenced measures, such as those used in the assessment of crime and violence, prioritize predictive accuracy (discrimination) at the expense of construct validity. In this article, we compared the discrimination and incremental validity of three commonly used criterion-referenced measures for sex offenders (Rapid Risk Assessment for Sex Offence Recidivism [RRASOR], Static-99R, and Static-2002R). In a meta-analysis of 20 samples \((n = 7,491)\), Static-99R and Static-2002R provided similar discrimination but outperformed the RRASOR in the prediction of sexual, violent, and any recidivism. Remarkably, despite large correlations between them \((r_s\) ranging from .70 to .92), these risk scales consistently added incremental validity to one another. The direction of the incremental effects, however, was not consistently positive. When controlling for the other measures, high scores on the RRASOR were associated with lower risk for violent and any recidivism. We also examined different methods of combining risk scales and found that the averaging approach produced better discrimination than choosing the highest score and produced better calibration than either choosing the lowest or highest risk score. The findings reinforce the importance of understanding the psychological content of criterion-referenced measures, even when the sole purpose is to predict a particular outcome and provide some direction concerning the best methods for combining risk scales.

The accuracy of recidivism risk assessments for sexual offenders: A meta-analysis of 118 prediction studies.
Hanson, R. Karl; Morton-Bourgon, Kelly E.

This review compared the accuracy of various approaches to the prediction of recidivism among sexual offenders. On the basis of a meta-analysis of 536 findings drawn from 118 distinct samples (45,398 sexual offenders, 16 countries), empirically derived actuarial measures were more accurate than unstructured professional judgment for all outcomes (sexual, violent, or any recidivism). The accuracy of structured professional judgment was intermediate between the accuracy found for the actuarial measures and for unstructured professional judgment. The effect sizes for the actuarial measures were moderate to large by conventional standards (average \(d\) values of 0.67–0.97); however, the utility of the actuarial measures will vary
according to the referral question and samples assessed. Further research should identify the psychologically meaningfully factors that contribute to risk for reoffending.

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Improving the Predictive Accuracy of Static-99 and Static-2002 With Older Sex Offenders Revised Age Weights

1. Leslie Helmus
2. David Thornton
3. R. Karl Hanson
4. Kelly M. Babchishin

1. Public Safety Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
2. Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
3. Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center, Mauston, WI, USA

1. Leslie Helmus, 10th floor, 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1A 0P8 Email: Leslie.helmus@ps.gc.ca

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Abstract

Actuarial risk assessment scales and their associated recidivism estimates are generally developed on samples of offenders whose average age is well below 50 years. Criminal behavior of all types declines with age; consequently, actuarial scales tend to overestimate recidivism for older offenders. The current study aimed to develop a revised scoring system for two risk assessment tools (Static-99 and Static-2002) that would more accurately describe older offenders’ risk of recidivism. Using data from 8,390 sex offenders derived from 24 separate samples, age was found to add incremental predictive validity to both Static-99 and Static-2002. After creating new age weights, the resulting instruments (Static-99R and Static-2002R) had only slightly higher relative predictive accuracy. The absolute recidivism estimates, however, provided a substantially better fit for older offenders than the recidivism estimates from the original scales. We encourage evaluators to adopt the revised scales with the new age weights.

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Predicting Reoffense for Community-Based Sexual Offenders
An Analysis of 30 Years of Data
1. Rebecca E. Swinburne Romine
2. Michael H. Miner
3. Dominic Poulin
4. S. Margretta Dwyer
5. Dianne Berg

1. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, USA

1. Rebecca E. Swinburne Romine, Program in Human Sexuality, University of Minnesota Medical School, 1300 South 2nd Street, Suite 180, Minneapolis, MN 55454, USA Email: swin0024@umn.edu

Abstract

This study contributes to the area of risk prediction by exploring whether the Static-99R is useful for predicting reoffense in community-based samples, and for noncontact offenders with and without identified victims. A total of 744 participants drawn from an outpatient sex offender treatment program in a large metropolitan area were followed for a period of up to 30 years. Multiple Cox Regressions were run; covariates included length of treatment, status in treatment, Static-99R items, and number of technical probation violations. Overall, reoffending was an infrequent occurrence in this sample regardless of how it was defined, with sexual reoffenses identified in 13% of the sample and any criminal reoffense identified in 20% of the sample. Consistent with previous research, the Static-99R was a better predictor of sex-related reoffenses than of nonsexual reoffenses. However, in no case were more than a couple of the items significantly related to reoffending and these items differed depending on reoffense definition.

Predictive Validity of the Static-99 and Static-2002 for Sex Offenders on Community Supervision

Leslie M. D. Helmus & R. Karl Hanson

1 Corrections Research, Public Safety Canada; 2 Carleton University Ottawa, Canada

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Abstract

The Static-99 is the most commonly used actuarial tool for sexual offenders. Although it has shown acceptable predictive accuracy in a large number of studies, all these studies involved researchers scoring the instrument retrospectively. Consequently, it is unclear whether similar results would be obtained when used in routine practice. The authors of the Static-99 have proposed a new scale, the
Static-2002, but there has been insufficient research to determine whether it is an improvement over the Static-99. This study examined the predictive accuracy of the Static-99 in a prospective study of 706 Canadian sexual offenders on community supervision. All assessments were conducted by the probation and parole officers responsible for supervising the cases. The Static-99 was compared with the Static-2002, which was scored retrospectively from criminal history records. After an average 3 year follow-up, the Static-99 and Static-2002 were equally accurate in predicting sexual recidivism (ROC of .76 for both). The Static-2002, however, was better than the Static-99 at predicting violent and general recidivism. There were no significant differences in the accuracy of the measures for rapists, child molesters, or non-contact offenders. Overall, the Static-99 and Static-2002 are both reliable and valid measures of recidivism risk for sexual offenders.