

The Colorado Sex Offender Risk Scale

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This study documents the development of an adult sex offender risk assessment tool. Data included criminal and sexual history as relatively static variables. More dynamic variables included a range of therapy dimensions assessed by treatment providers. The final risk scale included prior juvenile felony convictions, prior adult felony convictions, failure of the first or second grade, not being employed, victim being intoxicated, the perpetrator reporting NOT being sexually aroused during the crime, possession of a weapon during the crime, denial in therapy, sexual deviance in therapy, and motivation in therapy. The risk scale provided significant relative risk ratios against program failure at 12 and 30 months. Overall, those scoring high on the risk tool were at a 372% greater chance of failure than those scoring low.

Subjects. The sample consisted of 494 adult male sex offenders who were placed on probation supervision, on parole, in community corrections (prison diversion), and in prison treatment between December 1, 1996 and November 30, 1997. Several jurisdictions participated in the study including four county Probation Districts, one private Community Corrections Organization, two Parole counties, and two phases of DOC Prison Sex Offender Treatment Program. Of the 494 subjects, 218 were on probation, 47 on parole, and 224 in prison.

Outcome Measures. At risk to fail was defined as: revocation, revocation pending, negative treatment termination, absconded, commission of a new sex crime, and being on the brink of failure according to the supervising officer or prison therapist. Using the above definition of failure, 54% of the sample had failed at 12 months and 40% were considered failures at 30 months. Oddly, some who were considered failures at 12 months were back in programs and in good standing at 30 months. Therefore, the subjects considered to be failures are actually a somewhat different group at the two points in time.

Risk Assessment Scale Development. The scale was developed using outcome data from the 12-month point in time. It was then cross-validated against the 30 month outcomes. The scale was developed using stepwise regression and forced entry to determine what unique set of factors would empirically predict the probability of negative outcome. Because some variables may co-vary with each other, factors that were significantly related to negative outcome at the point of univariate analysis (presented above) may fall out of the analysis once multiple predictors are considered simultaneously.

12-Month Prediction. Offenders who score 4 or more points on the DCJ Sex Offender Risk Scale are at greater risk of failure (Odds Ratio = 2.05, 95% Confidence Band = 1.21 to 3.47; Chi Square = 7.36, $p < .01$). Two-thirds of the offenders scoring 4 or more are at greater risk of negative case outcome. Actuarial risk prediction places people in groups with different probabilities of re-offending. That is, the instrument does not predict individual risk. Rather, group risk is explicitly defined, and individuals fall into specific groups with known probabilities of risk. Offenders who score 4 or more on the above ten risk factors will be considered Sexually Violent Predators when they meet the other criteria identified in 18-3-414.5 (C.R.S.).

30-Month Prediction. Because the outcome at 12 months was used to actually choose the items for the risk tool, there is a potential for unique dependencies that may not cross-validate. As such, a cross-validation of the tool is needed. The 30-month outcome is not only longer in time but also is more independent of the development procedure. Here the Odds Ratio for failure prediction is 1.86 (95% Confidence Band = 1.12 to 3.08). It is gratifying to see that there is very little "shrinkage" in the risk ratio from the 12-month time point.

Overall Prediction. Since subjects were able to be failures at the 12-month point but then get back into treatment and be considered a success at 30 months, another way to approach the outcome data is to model those subjects that were a failure at either 12 months or at 30 months. Here a very impressive Odds Ratio of 3.72 (Confidence Band = 1.73 to 7.99) is found. This means that there is a 372% greater chance of someone with a score of 4 or greater failing than someone with low risk score.

Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Sex Offender Risk Assessment Scale

OFFENDER HISTORY:

1. The offender has one or more juvenile felony convictions or adjudications.
(Data Sources: Official records, PSIR, self-report obtained during the Sex Offense Specific Mental Health Evaluation required by the SOMB Standards.)
2. The offender has one or more prior adult felony convictions.
(Data Sources: Official records, PSIR, self-report obtained during the Sex Offense Specific Mental Health Evaluation required by the SOMB Standards.)
3. The offender failed first or second grade.
(Data Sources: Education Records, PSIR, self-report obtained during the Sex Offense Specific Mental Health Evaluation required by the SOMB Standards.)
4. The offender was not employed full time at the time of arrest.
(Data Sources: PSIR, self-report obtained during the Sex Offense Specific Mental Health Evaluation required by the SOMB Standards.)

INSTANT CRIME:

5. The victim was intoxicated when the crime was committed.
(Data Sources: Victim Statement, PSIR, Police Report, self-report obtained during the Sex Offense Specific Mental Health Evaluation required by the SOMB Standards.)
6. The offender reports he was NOT sexually aroused during the current crime.
(Data Sources: Self-report, Sex Offense Specific Mental Health Evaluation.)
7. The offender possessed a weapon during the current crime.
(Data Sources: Victim Statement, PSIR, Police Report, Mental Health Evaluation.)

CURRENT SCORES ON SOMB Dynamic Indicators Checklist:

8. The offender scored 20 or above on the CO-SOMB Denial Scale.
9. The offender scored 20 or above on the CO-SOMB Deviancy Scale.
10. The offender scored less than 20 on the CO-SOMB Motivation Scale.
(Data Source for 8,9,10: Sex Offense Specific Mental Health Evaluation required by the SOMB Standards.)