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Research in Brief

The Static Factors Assessment (SFA) of the Intake Assessment Process and Returns to Custody for Sex Offenders

KEY WORDS: *risk assessment, Static Factors Assessment, returns to custody, sex offenders*

What it means

The Static Factors Assessment (SFA) works just as well, if not better, for sex offenders compared to non-sex offenders, even though sex offenders consistently had lower rates of returns to custody. This was particularly true of the Criminal History Record (CHR) subscale, which outperformed the overall SFA rating with strong relationships to all outcomes among sex offenders.

What we found

Overall, 20% of sex offenders were returned to custody without a new offence, compared to 24% of non-sex offenders. Additionally, five-year rates of returns to custody for sex offenders were 17% for any new offence and 9% for a new violent offence (for non-sex offenders, the rates were 28% and 12%, respectively).

From the table, the overall SFA rating and the Criminal History and Offence Severity subscales were significantly related to returns to custody for both sex offenders and non-sex offenders, with small to large relationships. In most analyses, the relationships were stronger for sex offenders compared to non-sex offenders. Additionally, for both sex offenders and non-sex offenders, the Criminal History Record (CHR) had stronger relationships to the outcomes compared to the Offence Severity Record (OSR) and the overall SFA rating. In fact, the CHR total score demonstrated large relationships with all three outcomes examined for sex offenders.

Why we did this study

The SFA is a static risk scale used for all offenders in the Correctional Service of Canada. Given that there is an additional subscale scored for sex offenders, it is important to examine how the scale is related to post-release outcomes for this unique group of offenders.

What we did

We examined all federal offenders who were granted their first release between April 1, 2006, and March 21, 2008, who had commenced their sentence in

1997 or later, and had a SFA assessment completed. The overall population included 8,767 offenders, of whom 1,317 had a current or prior sex or sex-related offence.

Outcomes included returns to custody without a new offence within 8 months of release (to ensure adequate sample size with follow-up data while on community supervision; $n = 1,118$ sex offenders and 7,282 non-sex offenders), as well as returns to custody with any new offence and returns with a new violent offence (including sex offences) within 5 years of release.

The AUC was used as the effect size statistic to examine the relationship between the SFA and returns to custody. AUCs of .56, .64, and .71 correspond to small, moderate, and large relationships, respectively.

Relationship between SFA and Returns to Custody (Presented with AUC Values)

	Sex offenders	Non-sex offenders
SFA overall rating		
Returns without offence	.60	.61
Any new offence	.64	.61
Violent offence	.63	.63
SFA Criminal History Record		
Returns without offence	.75	.66
Any new offence	.76	.71
Violent offence	.74	.70
SFA Offence Severity Record		
Returns without offence	.61	.60
Any new offence	.63	.56
Violent offence	.66	.65

Note. All AUCs were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

For more information

Please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

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