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Research at a glance

Static Factors Assessment in the Offender Intake Assessment Process: Relationship to Release and Community Outcomes

KEY WORDS: *risk assessment, Static Factors Assessment, Aboriginal offenders, women offenders, reoffending*

What it means

The overall rating of the Static Factors Assessment (SFA) demonstrates significant relationships with community outcomes. The Criminal History Record (CHR) subcomponent of the SFA performs particularly well, generally demonstrating large relationships to outcomes and outperforming the overall SFA rating, the Offence Severity Record (OSR) subcomponent, and even the Revised Statistical Information on Recidivism Scale (SIR-R1). These patterns held true for gender and Aboriginal ancestry subgroups. Additionally, most of the SFA items are related to the outcomes, supporting their use in the scale. It may be possible to improve the scale by reducing the number of items (saving time for correctional staff) without reducing its utility.

What we found

The overall SFA ratings were related to first release. Offenders with higher risk ratings were less likely to be granted discretionary release. This was also true for gender and Aboriginal ancestry subgroups.

The overall risk rating on the SFA was significantly related to all of the community outcomes assessed. The CHR (assessing youth and adult criminal history) and the OSR (assessing diversity and level of harm in current and previous offences) subcomponents were also related to all outcomes, with much stronger support for the CHR. Most of the individual items in the CHR were significantly related to the community outcomes, whereas the support for the OSR items was more mixed. Effect sizes tended to be lower for Aboriginal offenders (men or women) and similar or slightly higher for non-Aboriginal women compared to non-Aboriginal men, though the support for the CHR remained relatively strong in all subgroups.

Why we did this study

Risk assessment is an integral activity in corrections. Given its profound implications for both public safety and the offender, assessment practices should be periodically evaluated and updated to reflect advances in knowledge and to ensure continual utility

with changing offender populations. The SFA consists of 137 items grouped into three subcomponents: the CHR, the OSR, and the Sex Offence History Checklist (SOHC; the latter scale was not considered in the current study as it is scored for only a subset of offenders). A summary risk judgment (low risk, moderate risk, or high risk) is formed based upon some or all of these items and/or subcomponents.

The goal of this study was to examine whether the SFA overall summary ratings are related to first release type and if the SFA overall summary rating, item scores, and subcomponent scores are related to community outcomes.

What we did

All federal offenders granted their first release between April 1, 2006 and March 31, 2008 were included in the study, provided that they had SFA assessments and sufficient follow-up data. Analyses were examined for the total population, as well as disaggregated by gender and Aboriginal ancestry. Analyses examined whether the SFA was related to three community outcomes: revocations without offence, readmissions with any offence, and readmissions with a violent offence.

For more information

Helmus, L., & Forrester, T. K. (2014). *Static Factors Assessment (SFA) in the Offender Intake Assessment in the Offender Intake Assessment Process: Relationship to Release and Community Outcomes* (Research Report R-339). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

To obtain a PDF version of the full report, or for other inquiries, please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

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