

POSTER

Incremental Validity of the Static-99 and PAI with Community-Treated Sex Offenders

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Problem

Sexual offenses are relatively common among crimes (Rennison, 2002) and have serious physical and psychological consequences for those assaulted (Foa & Steketee, 1987). Furthermore, a recent meta-analysis of recidivism studies on 29,450 sex offenders concluded that the overall rate of sexual recidivism was 13.7% after 5-6 years (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005). This serious problem has prompted psychologists to devote a great deal of energy to assessing and managing risk of reoffense among individuals who have committed a prior sexual offense. This project attempts to improve upon the demonstrated predictive ability of one common actuarial risk assessment instrument.

This study uses data from two instruments, the Static-99 and the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI). The Static-99 is a widely-used, actuarial risk assessment instrument designed for use with adult male sex offenders (Hanson & Thornton, 1999). The Static-99's authors have used ROC analyses to calculate its AUC as .70 for sexual reoffending and .69 for violent reoffending (Hanson & Thornton, 2000). These results suggest that the Static-99 is a moderately powerful predictive instrument with an incarcerated sample of sex offenders. Most studies comparing the Static-99 to other, established risk assessment instruments suggested that the Static-99 performs as well as or better than those other instruments (Barbaree, Seto, Langton, & Peacock, 2001; Hanson & Thornton, 2000).

The PAI (Morey, 1991) is a self-report measure of personality and psychopathology. Because it represents a psychometric improvement over comparable scales, the PAI has been widely adopted in forensic settings (Edens, Cruise, & Buffington-Vollum, 2001; Morey & Quigley, 2002), where challenges to instrument reliability, validity, and generalizability often arise during the process of litigation. This study will focus on the use of two PAI scales: Antisocial Features (ANT) and Aggression (AGG), which may be particularly useful in predicting risk of recidivism among sex offenders. These two scales have been found to be significantly predictive of violence and other infractions among incarcerated populations (Buffington-Vollum, Edens, Johnson, & Johnson, 2002; Caperton, Edens, & Johnson, 2004; Edens, Buffington-Vollum, Colwell, Johnson, & Johnson, 2002; Walters, 2007).

This study tests the hypotheses that adding data from ANT, AGG, and the combination of ANT + AGG will significantly increase the predictive ability of the Static-99 with regard to sexual recidivism. Support for this hypothesis would suggest that psychologists may be able to more accurately assess risk of sexual recidivism using data that they have already gathered.

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Subjects

This study uses a sample of 125 adult males seeking treatment for sexual deviancy at a community-based agency. Individuals were self-referred or referred by the legal system. The participants report a variety of mixed sexual offense types (e.g., rape, child molestation, non-contact sex offenses). The offenders vary in age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and criminal history. The sample for this study is unique in that it focuses on participants in community-based treatment, rather than solely upon sex offenders released from prison. Thus, this study will provide data on the generalizability of the Static-99 and the PAI ANT and AGG scales in populations different than the standardization samples.

Procedure

Permission from the relevant university and correctional Institutional Review Boards was granted prior to data collection. The participants completed the PAI as part of an assessment battery. The Static-99 was scored by research assistants based on self-reported offense histories, psychological evaluation reports, and official legal records. Sexual recidivism data was obtained from the state Department of Corrections. The expected average follow-up period following the evaluation is 4-5 years.

Results and Conclusions (expected)

The researchers will perform logistic regression analyses to determine whether Static-99 scores, ANT scores, and AGG scores account for unique variance in sexual recidivism. They will then perform ROC analyses to determine the predictive validity of the Static-99, Static-99 + ANT, Static-99 + AGG, and Static-99 + ANT + AGG with this sample.

When completed, the results of this study will test the hypotheses that data from ANT, AGG, and ANT + AGG will significantly increase the predictive ability of the Static-99. If the results provide evidence for one or more of these hypotheses, then psychologists with access to the PAI profiles of sex offenders will be able to perform actuarial risk assessment more accurately. Given the popularity of both the Static-99 and the PAI in forensic settings, combining the predictive power of both instruments could give psychologists a useful tool in predicting sexual recidivism without requiring them to administer any additional measures.

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