

Can Sexual Offender Risk Measures be Accurately Scored from Self-Report Information Alone?

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Introduction

- * Researchers want to estimate risk
- * Most risk assessment measures require
 - * Criminal history
 - * Victim information
 - * Demographic information



Self-Reported Information

- * Less time-consuming
- * Early research suggests that respondents are willing to disclose crime (e.g., Wallerstein & Wylie, 1947)
- * But does this correspond with official records?



Self-Reported Information

* Problems with self-reports

- * Vulnerable to self-presentation bias
- * Offenders can manipulate scale **scores** (Gendreau, Irvine, & Knight, 1973; Holden, Kroner, Fekken, & Popham, 1992)



Self-Reported Information

- * Self-report crime and delinquency literature suggests that self-report measures are acceptably accurate and valid, capturing the majority of all offences (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000)



General and Violent Offender Research

- * Kroner et al. (2007)
 - * Only 10% of information was lost due to underreporting
- * Kroner and Loza (2001)
 - * Self-report measure could predict nonviolent and violent recidivism equally

Sexual Offender Research

- * Laws et al. (2000)
 - * Self-reported sexual interests was more accurate than PPG
- * Worling (2006)
 - * Self-report measures could distinguish offenders against children from offenders against adults
 - * Self-report measures further discriminated those with male child victims

Research Question



- * Can sexual offender risk assessment tools be scored from offenders' self-reports with reasonable accuracy?

Risk Measures

- * **Static-99** (Hanson & Thornton, 1999, 2000)
 - * 10 static/historical items
 - * Developed to assess risk for sexual recidivism among known adult male sex offenders
- * **SORAG** (Quinsey et al., 2006)
 - * 14 static/historical items
 - * Developed to assess risk for violent recidivism (including sexual contact offenses) among adult sex offenders

The Current Study

Study 1

- **Static-99** vs. Self-report

Study 2

- **Static-99** vs. Self-report

Study 3

- **Static-99 & SORAG** vs. Self-report

General Methods

- * Self-report information was given under conditions of confidentiality
- * All three datasets were collected as part of larger projects

Static-99 Scoring

Question Number	Risk Factor	Codes		Score
1	Young	Aged 25 or older		0
		Aged 18 – 24 99		1
2	Ever Lived With	Ever lived with lover for at least two years?		
		Yes		0
		No		1
3	Index non-sexual violence - Any Convictions?	No		0
		Yes		1
4	Prior non-sexual violence - Any Convictions?	No		0
		Yes		1
5	Prior Sex Offences	Charges	Convictions	
		None	None	0
		1-2	1	1
		3-5	2-3	2
		6+	4+	3
6	Prior sentencing dates (excluding index)	3 or less		0
		4 or more		1
7	Any convictions for non-contact sex offences	No		0
		Yes		1
8	Any Unrelated Victims	No		0
		Yes		1
9	Any Stranger Victims	No		0
		Yes		1
10	Any Male Victims	No		0
		Yes		1
	Total Score	Add up scores from individual risk factors		

SORAG Scoring

Item	Risk Factor	Codes	Score
1	Lived with biological parents until 16	Yes	-2
		No	+3
2	Elementary school maladjustment	No problems	-1
		Slight or moderate	+2
		Severe	+5
3	History of alcohol problems (Parental alcoholism, Adult alcohol, Alcohol involved in index, Teenage alcohol, alcohol involved in prior)	None	-1
		1 or 2 problems	0
		3 problems	+1
		4 or 5 problems	+2
4	Marital status	Ever married	-2
		Never married	+1
5	Criminal history score for non-violent offenses	Score 0	-2
		Score 1 or 2	0
		Score 3 or above	+3
6	Criminal history score for violent offenses	Score 0	-2
		Score 1 or 2	0
		Score 3 or above	+6
7	Prior sexual convictions	0	-1
		1 or 2	+1
		3 or more	+5
8	History of sex offenses against girls under 14 only	Yes	0
		No	+4
9	Failure on prior conditional release	No	0
		Yes	+3
10	Age at index offense	39 or over	-5
		34 to 38	-2
		28 to 33	-1
		27	0
		26 or less	+2
11	Meets DSM-III criteria for any personality disorder	No	-2
		Yes	+3
12	Meets DSM-III criteria for schizophrenia	Yes	-3
		No	+1
13	Phallometric test results	Nondeviant preferences	-1
		No results available	0
		Deviant preferences	+1
14	Hare PCL-R score	9 or under	-3
		10 to 14	-1
		15 to 24	0
		25 to 34	+4
		35 or higher	+12

Sample Self-Report Questions

Have you ever been married?

0 = Never 3 = 3 times
1 = Once 4 = 4 times
2 = Twice 5 = 5 times or more

Not counting the offences that you're in prison for now, how many sex offences have you been convicted of?

0 = None 5 = 5
1 = 1 6 = 6
2 = 2 7 = 7
3 = 3 8 = 8
4 = 4 9 = 9 or more

Study 1 Methods

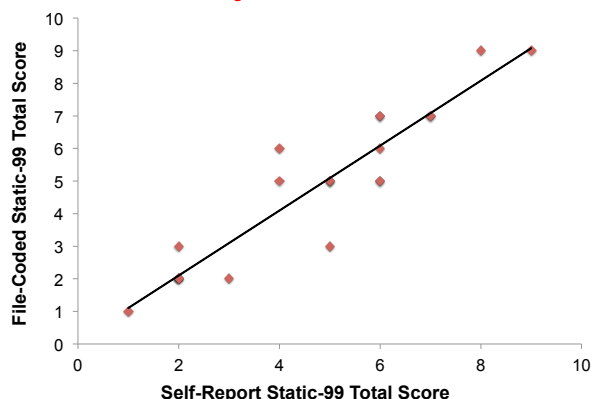
- * 22 adult male sexual offenders ($M = 39.95$ years, $SD = 8.51$)
- * 10 child molesters; 12 rapists
- * Offenders serving federal sentences within medium and maximum security prisons
- * Static-99 scored by prison staff
- * Self-report information was not available to score Static-99 item 3



Study 1 Results

Static-99 Item	K	Self-Report			
		ICC (95% CI)	Under (%)	Agree (%)	Over (%)
1. Young age	-		9.1	90.9	0
2. Ever lived with partner	.91		0	95.5	4.5
4. Prior non-sexual violence convictions	.52		9.1	77.3	13.6
5. Prior sexual convictions		.90 (.76 – .96)	18.2	81.8	0
6. Prior sentencing dates	.51		4.5	77.3	18.2
7. Any non-contact offences	.56		0	81.8	18.2
8. Any unrelated victims	.15		9.1	77.3	13.6
9. Any stranger victims	.61		9.1	81.8	9.1
10. Any male victims	.86		4.5	95.5	0
Total		.93 (.84 – .97)	0	66.7	33.3

Study 1 Results



Study 2 Methods

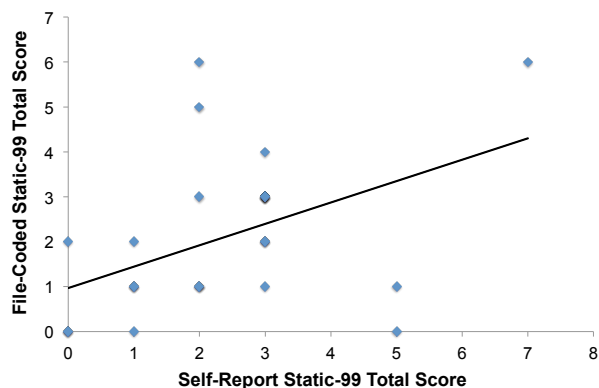
- * 28 adult male child molesters ($M = 40.93$ years, $SD = 11.74$)
- * Offenders serving federal sentences within medium and maximum security prisons
- * Static-99 scored by prison staff
- * Self-report information was not available to score Static-99 item 3



Study 2 Results

Static-99 Item	K	Self-Report			
		ICC (95% CI)	Under (%)	Agree (%)	Over (%)
1. Young age	1.00		0	100.0	0
2. Ever lived with partner	1.00		0	100.0	0
4. Prior non-sexual violence convictions	.55		14.8	81.5	3.7
5. Prior sexual convictions		-.02 (-.39 – .36)	11.1	70.4	18.5
6. Prior sentencing dates	.57		7.4	85.2	7.4
7. Any non-contact offences	.72		7.4	88.9	3.7
8. Any unrelated victims	.40		25.9	70.4	3.7
9. Any stranger victims	.36		11.1	88.9	0
10. Any male victims	.61		11.1	88.9	0
Total		.21 (-.18 – .54)	40.7	37.0	22.3

Study 2 Results



Study 3 Methods

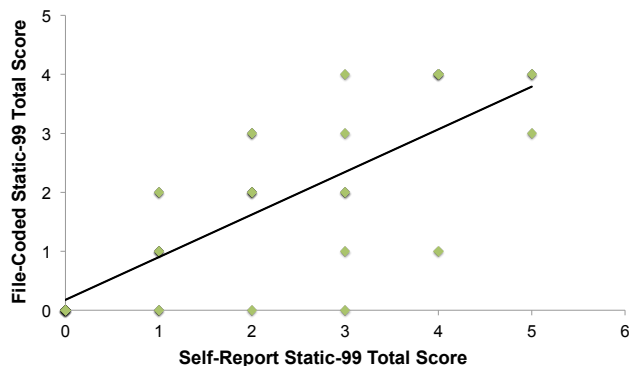
- * 32 adult male child molesters ($M = 45.70$ years, $SD = 15.15$)
- * Offenders recruited from provincial and federal prisons, and outpatient services
- * Static-99 and SORAG scored by graduate student
- * Self-report information was available only for Static-99 items 1, 4, 5, 6, and 10
- * Self-report information was not available to score SORAG items 3, 8, 10-14



Study 3 Results: Static-99

Static-99 Item	K	Self-Report			
		ICC (95% CI)	Under (%)	Agree (%)	Over (%)
1. Young age	1.00		0	100	0
4. Prior non-sexual violence convictions	.60		0	81.2	18.8
5. Prior sexual convictions		.61 (.35 – .79)	12.5	65.6	21.9
6. Prior sentencing dates	.74		6.3	87.5	6.2
10. Male victims	.52		6.3	84.4	9.4
Total		.73 (.52 – .86)	15.6	53.1	31.3

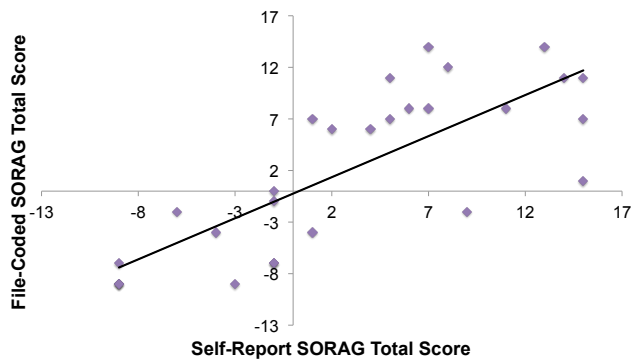
Study 3 Results: Static-99



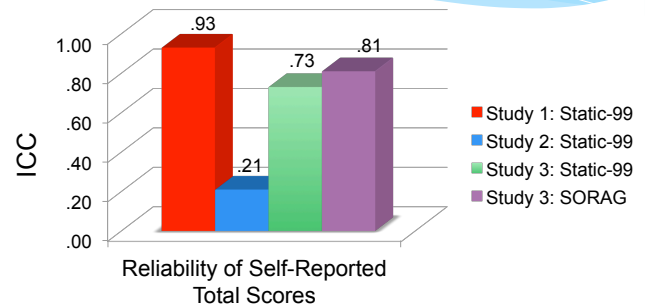
Study 3 Results: SORAG

SORAG Item	K	Self-Report			
		ICC (95% CI)	Under (%)	Agree (%)	Over (%)
1. Lived with biological parents until age 16	.64		10.7	82.1	7.1
2. Elementary school maladjustment		.42 (.08 – .68)	28.6	57.1	14.3
4. Marital status	.89		3.6	96.4	0
5. Criminal history score for non-violent offences		.69 (.43 – .84)	10.7	60.7	28.6
6. Criminal history score for violent offences		.36 (-.02 – .64)	10.7	71.4	17.9
7. Prior sexual convictions		.67 (.40 – .83)	14.3	71.4	14.3
9. Failure on conditional release	.58		14.3	82.1	3.6
Total		.81 (.63 – .91)			

Study 3 Results: SORAG



Overall Results



Discussion & Implications



- * Self-reported risk measured by Static-99 and SORAG can be reasonably accurate
- * Demographic items had the highest agreement
- * Under research conditions, offenders' self-reports can be used to score sexual offender risk assessments with reasonable accuracy

Limitations

1. Small sample sizes
2. Some self-report items could not be scored and some were not exact matches
3. Self-presentation bias was not measured
 - Even though studies have shown that the extent of socially desirable responses is smaller than assumed and its impact on self-report measures is low (e.g., Kroner et al., 2007; Mathie et al., 2010)
4. We did not investigate this question in an applied setting



Future Directions

- * Replicate with a larger and more diverse sample of sex offenders
- * Applied setting
- * Can self-report risk predict recidivism?



Conclusion

- * For research, file review to score risk assessment measures may not be necessary
- * Self-reported risk may be valid under research conditions and can replace file review when such files are unavailable



More about us and our research:

Aggression Cognition and Behaviour Research
(ACBR Lab)
<http://carleton.ca/acbrlab/>

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