

STABLE-2007 and ACUTE-2007 FAQ and Other Updates

Last updated: 2023-06-29

This document can be considered as supplementary coding information alongside the official coding manual, reflecting new decisions made by the scale developers since the release of the latest coding manuals (Fernandez et al., 2014; Fernandez et al., 2015).

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Can STABLE-2007 and ACUTE-2007 be used with individuals whose only sexual offences involve the possession and/or distribution of child sexual exploitation materials (CSEM-exclusive group)?

Recent research (Babchishin et al., 2023) supports the use of STABLE-2007 and ACUTE-2007 for individuals whose only sexual offences have involved the possession and/or distribution of child sexual exploitation materials (CSEM-exclusive group). Based on this research, SAARNA supports the use of STABLE-2007 and ACUTE-2007 to identify risk-relevant propensities, high-risk situations, and to help determine treatment intensity for individuals with this offence history.

Currently, SAARNA has no recommendations concerning the use of STABLE-2007 or ACUTE-2007 scores to estimate recidivism rates for individuals whose only sexual offences involve CSEM. In particular, we recommend that evaluators do not use Static-99R or Static-2002R to estimate the likelihood of sexual recidivism for individuals whose only sexual offences involve CSEM.

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Should ‘Emotional Identification with Children’ be coded in STABLE-2007 for individuals whose sexual offences involve CSEM?

Yes, evaluators using STABLE-2007 should code Emotional Identification with Children when assessing individuals whose only sexual offences have involved CSEM. The STABLE-2007 Coding Manual (Fernandez, 2014, p. 50) specifies that this item should only be scored for individuals with at least one victim under the age of 14; however, the recent study by Babchishin et al. (2023) indicated that Emotional Identification with Children was strongly related to sexual recidivism for the CSEM-exclusive group. Consequently, we recommend that this item is scored for the CSEM-only population and be included in the STABLE-2007 total score.



How should 'Victim Access' be coded in ACUTE-2007 for individuals whose sexual offences involve CSEM?

When evaluators are using ACUTE-2007 with individuals who have a history of CSEM offences (CSEM-only, or CSEM in combination with offences against an identifiable victim), evaluators should pay special attention to the potential of CSEM recidivism. Although CSEM offending may be a risk for individuals without a history of CSEM offending, it is particularly important for the CSEM-exclusive groups because it is the most likely form of sexual recidivism for individuals with a history of CSEM-only offending (Babchishin et al., 2023). As per usual, risk assessments of the CSEM-only population should also consider the risk for sexual offending against identifiable victims.

The following provides some guidance on scoring victim access for individuals with a history of CSEM offending.

Recent cases of CSEM offending are almost exclusively committed online. Consequently, monitoring the risk for CSEM offending involves monitoring the extent to which individuals are placing themselves at risk through unsupervised internet access. When assessing this item, consider the opportunities for unsupervised internet access and whether he appears to be changing or arranging his life to create opportunities for unsupervised internet access. Conversely, consider whether he is making efforts to minimize or strictly control unsupervised internet access (e.g., by only accessing the internet where others can see what is on the screen). Does he repeatedly fail to take steps to avoid situations that could result in unsupervised internet access? Do his routine activities (work, school, home) provide easy access to the internet?

Like other forms of victim access, unsupervised access to the internet can be categorized as *proximity access*, *incidental access*, and *intentional access*. *Proximity access* involves accessing the internet, but only in a way that prevents access to CSEM. For example, if he uses a computer to look for employment but only does so under the supervision of another person, this would warrant a score of "0". *Incidental access* occurs when he could have unsupervised internet access, but responds appropriately to the situation. For example, he logs into a terminal at a public library in order to find a book, and then discovers that the computer provides open internet access (not just access to the library catalogue as he thought). He responds by immediately logging off, and asking the librarian if there is another way to access the catalogue, or by leaving the library. Unintentional circumstances warrant a score of "1" so that the assessor is prompted to follow up at the next meeting and see if the situation re-occurs. At that time, evaluate if he is doing what he can to limit or minimize access. *Intentional access* occurs when he tries to access the internet without supervision (e.g., is seen at a pawnshop looking to buy a computer or cell phone). Any unsupervised internet access (e.g., uses public computers without supervision) would warrant a score of "2". If he is searching for CSEM (whether or not he finds it), the situation requires immediate intervention ("3 – Intervene now").

References

- Babchishin, KM, Dibayula, S, McCulloch, C, Hanson, RK, & Helmus, LM. (2023). ACUTE-2007 and STABLE-2007 Predict Recidivism for Men Adjudicated for Child Sexual Exploitation Material Offending. *Law and Human Behavior, 47*(5), 606-618. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000540>
- Fernandez, Y, Gotch K, Hanson, RK, & Harris, AJR. (2015). *ACUTE-2007 Coding Manual – Revised 2015*. SAARNA: The Society for the Advancement of Actuarial Risk Needs Assessment.
- Fernandez, Y, Harris, AJR, Hanson, RK, & Sparks, J. (2014). *STABLE-2007 Coding Manual – Revised 2014*. SAARNA: The Society for the Advancement of Actuarial Risk Needs Assessment.