POSTER

Comparing the Predictive Accuracies of Six Sex Offender Risk Assessment Measures Along With Randomly Derived Coffee Can Measures

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The focus on reducing sexual reoffending has led to the development of actuarial risk assessment instruments to estimate risk of reoffence and ensure public safety. Although the Static-99 is most frequently used by clinicians, many others are commonly used as well (McGrath et al., 2010). Empirical findings provide strong support for actuarial measures in their degree of reliability, validity, and predictive accuracy (Langton et al., 2007; Rettenberger, Matthes, Boer, & Eher, 2010), but some debate continues regarding which risk assessment measure has the most empirical support. This debate was addressed in Kroner, Mills, and Reddon's study (2005) where they created randomly-derived measures of risk by extracting extant risk factors from a coffee can. They found that these randomly-derived measures were better than the original instruments, from which these items were taken, at predicting criminal recidivism and suggests that, as long as the measures include valid and meaningful risk factors, the structure of the measure becomes less critical.

The present study replicates the methodology used in Kroner et al.'s study but specifically examines the prediction of sexual violence. Actuarial measures that include the SORAG, Static-99, Static-2002, as well as the Static-99R and Static-2002R, were completed on 400 sexual offenders. Items from these measures were placed in a coffee can, and 13 items were taken from the can to form a new measure. This was repeated to generate four Coffee Can measures to predict sexual recidivism. The area under the curve will be calculated to investigate the predictive accuracy of each measure that was used in this study, including the four randomly-derived Coffee Can measures. All data has already been collected and currently being analyzed.

This poster presentation will report ROCs, and implications of our findings will be discussed. Direct comparisons between risk assessment instruments is important because evaluators want to choose the best available instrument(s) for evaluating sex offender risk, or at least be able to defend their use of certain instruments (Langton et al., 2007). Unfortunately, the struggle of choosing the appropriate risk assessment measure persists for clinicians. Hence, in addition to examining if randomly-derived measures of risk will predict sexual recidivism as well as the original measures, this presentation will contribute to the body of literature measuring the predictive accuracies among the most frequently used and researched sex offender risk assessment instruments to predict general and sexual recidivism.