
VASOR-2

Vermont Assessment of Sex Offender Risk-2 Manual

Robert J. McGrath, Stephen E. Hoke, and Michael P. Lasher

October 2013

Copyright and Permissions

Copyright © 2013 by Robert J. McGrath, Stephen E. Hoke, and Michael P. Lasher

The authors are pleased to make available the Vermont Assessment of Sex Offender Risk-2 (VASOR-2), without charge, to mental health, social service, and corrections professionals in the sex offender assessment, treatment, and supervision field for use in providing services to their clients. However, no part of the VASOR-2 or its supporting materials (i.e., instructions, scoring sheet) may be copied, downloaded, stored in a retrieval system, or redistributed for any other commercial purpose without the expressed written permission of the authors.

Anyone choosing to use or adopt the assessment guidelines outlined herein does so on the sole basis of their responsibility to judge their suitability for their own specific purposes. The authors, their employees, and agents neither assume nor accept any responsibility or legal liability for any injury or damages whatsoever resulting from the use of the VASOR-2 and the guidelines outlined herein.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank the several individuals who have reviewed and recommended changes to one or more versions of the scale. They include Heather Allin, Tammy Blakeney, Maureen Buell, Catherine Burns, Georgia Cumming, Shelly Goddard, Kris Goldstein, Kathleen Kennedy, Calvin Langton, Joy Livingston, Angela Ross, Zachary Scott, Melanie Williams, and Doug Wilson.

We also extend our appreciation to the authors of the Static-99 and Static-2002 scoring manuals (Harris, Phenix, Hanson, & Thornton, 2003; Phenix, Doren, Helmus, Hanson, & Thornton, 2009) whose work informed the development of coding rules for the VASOR-2. As well, three Static-99 items are included in the VASOR-2.

Finally, we thank Howard Barbaree for permission to use his Canadian dataset in our analyses.

Contact Information

Questions about this manual may be directed to the authors. We welcome comments that will help us improve this manual and the scale.

Robert J. McGrath
President, McGrath Psychological Services
Middlebury, VT 05753
E-mail: rmcgrath@sover.net

Stephen E. Hoke
The Villages, FL 32163
E-mail: shoke@gmavt.net

Michael P. Lasher
Vermont Treatment Program for Sexual Abusers
Windsor, VT 05089
E-mail: lasher.michael.p@gmail.com

Table of Contents

Overview and Administration	1
Introduction.....	1
Target Population.....	1
Changes from Last Version.....	2
User Qualifications and Training.....	2
Administration and Interpretation.....	3
VASOR-2 and SOTIPS Combination.....	5
Summary.....	5
Scoring Instructions	7
General Scoring Rules.....	7
Reoffense Risk Scale Items.....	9
1. Age at Community Placement.....	9
2. Prior Sex Offense Convictions.....	10
3. Prior Sentencing Dates.....	12
4. Any Violations of Probation, Parole, or Release Conditions During Past Five Years.....	13
5. Any Convictions for Non-Contact Sex Offenses.....	14
6. Any Male Victims.....	15
7. Relationship to Victims.....	16
8. Offense-Related Sexual Fixation.....	17
9. Substance Abuse Use During Past Five Years in Community.....	18
10. Address Changes During Past Year.....	19
11. Time Employed or in School During Past Year in Community.....	20
12. Sex Offender Treatment History.....	21
Severity Factors Checklist.....	23
1. Most Sexually Intrusive Index Sex Offense.....	23
2. Most Force Used During Index Sex Offenses.....	24
3. Most Physical Harm to Index Sex Offense Victims.....	25
4. Vulnerability Characteristics of the Index Offense Victims.....	26
References	27
Appendices	29
A. Scale Development and Psychometric Properties.....	29
B. VASOR-2 Vermont Sexual and Violent Recidivism Norms.....	33
C. Combined VASOR-2 and SOTIPS Vermont Sexual and Violent Recidivism Norms.....	35
Score Sheet	37

Overview and Administration

Introduction

The Vermont Assessment of Sex Offender Risk-2 (VASOR-2) is designed to assess risk among adult males who have been convicted of at least one qualifying sex offense. It is composed of a 12-item Reoffense Risk Scale and a 4-item Severity Factors Checklist. The Reoffense Risk Scale is statistically derived and is designed to assess risk for sexual and violent recidivism. The Severity Factors Checklist is clinically derived and is designed to describe the severity of sex offenses. The VASOR-2 is a revised version of the VASOR (McGrath & Hoke, 1994/2001).

The VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale predicted sexual recidivism with moderate accuracy (AUC = .74) in a development sample of 1,581 adult male sex offenders (McGrath, Lasher, Cumming, Langton, & Hoke, 2013). This predictive accuracy was similar to the original VASOR (AUC = .71). The VASOR-2 showed good interrater reliability (ICC = .88). The VASOR-2 has fewer items and simpler scoring instructions than the VASOR. We now recommend that evaluators use the VASOR-2 instead of the VASOR.

This manual describes how the VASOR-2 was constructed and is scored and interpreted. It also describes the instrument's target population, psychometric properties, and changes from the last version. As well, the manual describes how the VASOR-2, a static risk instrument, can be used with a dynamic risk measure, the Sex Offender Treatment Intervention and Progress Scale (SOTIPS; McGrath, Cumming, & Lasher, 2013), to improve its predictive accuracy and assess how an offender's risk to reoffend may change over time.

Target Population

The VASOR-2 is designed for use with adult males who have been convicted of one or more qualifying sex offenses and committed at least one of these sex offenses on or after their 18th birthday. Following definitions based on Harris et al. (2003), qualifying offenses are called Category "A" sex offenses. A second type of offense, Category "B" sex offenses, should be used to score the VASOR-2 as well, but only if the offender has a conviction for a Category "A" sex offense.

Category "A" sex offenses are convictions for illegal sexual behavior committed against an identifiable child or non-consenting adult victim. A sex offense, as further detailed on page 7, need not be called sexual in its statutory definition to be a qualifying sex offense. Convictions for offenses that involved illegal sexual behavior that resulted in "non-sexual" convictions, or involved non-sexual behaviors that had sexual motives, count as qualifying offenses. Category "A" sex offenses include:

- contact sex offenses such as sexual assault, attempted sexual assault, and child molestation; and
- non-contact sex offenses such as exhibitionism, voyeurism, and Internet luring.

Category "B" sex offenses are convictions for sexual behavior that was illegal, but the parties were consenting, or no identifiable victim was involved. The VASOR-2 is not intended for use with individuals whose only sex offense is a conviction for a Category "B" offense. Category "B" sex offenses include:

- consenting sex with an adult in a public place and soliciting a prostitute,
- possessing child pornography, and additionally,
- statutory rape where the offender and victim age difference was less than three years.

In summary, if an offender has any **Category "A"** sex offense convictions, then all **Category "B"** sex offense convictions should be used to score the VASOR-2.

Changes from the Last Version

This manual updates previous versions of the scale. Whereas items that comprised previous versions of the VASOR were selected and weighted based on literature reviews and clinical consensus among an expert panel, all VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale items were selected and weighted based on statistical procedures.

The specific revisions are as follows:

- The item “Age at Community Placement” was added to the Reoffense Risk Scale because it added incremental predictive accuracy to the scale.
- The items “Force Used During Index Offense” and “Amenability to Treatment” were dropped because they did not predict sexual recidivism.
- The items “Alcohol Abuse During the Past Five Years” and “Drug Abuse During the Past Five Years” were combined into one item, namely, “Substance Abuse During the Past Five Years.”
- The item “VOP’s and Other Court Order Violations in the Past Five Years” was changed to “Any Violations of Probation, Parole or Other Release Conditions During Past Five Years” with two scoring options; no violations or any violations. The new item is simpler to score and predicted as well as the original item.
- The item “Prior Adult Convictions” was replaced with the Static-99 item “Prior Sentencing Dates” because it predicted sex reoffending better than the original item.
- The VASOR item “Male Victim and/or History of Exhibitionism” was separated into two items to improve item transparency. It also provided the opportunity to include convictions for all types of non-contact sex offenses as a risk factor, as opposed to just exhibitionism. The two new items are Static-99 items “Any Male Victims” and “Any Convictions for Non-Contact Sex Offenses.”
- The item “Deviant Sexual Fixation” was renamed “Offense-Related Sexual Fixation” because it is less pejorative terminology.
- The terms and definitions of “index offense,” Category “A” and “B” sex offenses, “index cluster,” and “pseudo- recidivism” have been adopted from the Static-99 coding manual (Harris et al., 2003) to improve definitional clarity and be consistent with concepts commonly used in the field.
- The Violence Risk Scale was renamed the Severity Factors Checklist to indicate that its primary purpose is to describe the severity of an individual’s sexual offending and the fact that it is descriptive rather than empirical in nature.
- The Violence Risk Scale items “Prior Sentencing Dates for Crimes Involving Violence” and “Prior Conviction for a Crime Involving a Potentially Deadly Weapon” are not used in the current checklist because they include non-sexual violence factors.
- The Violence Risk Scale item “Victim Under Age 5, Over Age 55, or Mentally or Physically Disabled” was renamed “Vulnerability Characteristics of the Index Offense Victims” and is composed of six revised individually scored sub-items.
- The VASOR matrix that graphed the intersection of the Reoffense Risk Scale and Violence Scale scores was replaced with one table on which an individual’s Reoffense Risk Scale score and relative risk category (low, moderate-low, moderate-high, and high) is marked.

User Qualifications and Training

The VASOR-2 is designed to be scored easily by clinicians, correctional caseworkers, and probation and parole officers. Before using the VASOR-2, however, it is critical that users read this manual and complete training that includes scoring practice cases in order to optimize scoring accuracy and reliability. VASOR-2 users should also have a basic understanding of risk factors related to sexual offense recidivism and risk assessment principles.

Administration and Interpretation

In order to score the VASOR-2, the evaluator should review the offender's official criminal record and follow the scoring criteria for each item detailed in this manual. The scoring process, ideally, should also include an interview with the individual, but an interview is not necessary. The VASOR-2 is composed of a 12-item Reoffense Risk Scale and a 4-item Severity Factors Checklist. Scores are recorded on a score sheet that can be found on the last page of this manual.

Reoffense Risk Scale

The Reoffense Risk Scale is designed for estimating the likelihood that an offender will be charged with committing a new sexual or violent offense. The 12 items that comprise the scale are static in nature. They pertain to sexual and nonsexual offense history, victim characteristics, offender demographics, prior substance abuse, residence and employment stability, and sex offender treatment history. Scale scores range from 0 to 22 points and are organized into four risk groups: low (0 to 5), moderate-low (6 to 8), moderate-high (9 to 11), and high (12 to 22).

The VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale has predicted sexual (AUC = .74; CI = .70 - .79) and violent (including sexual) recidivism (AUC = .71; CI = .68 - .74) in a development sample of 1,581 adult male sex offenders drawn from four follow-up studies, one from Canada and three from Vermont. Characteristics of these studies are detailed in Appendix A. The scale also has shown good interrater reliability (ICC = .88).

Estimated 5-year sexual and violent recidivism rates for individual scores and risk categories (low, moderate-low, moderate-high, and high) are shown in Appendix B. These norms are based on data from the Vermont 2011 sample, which is described in Appendix A. Estimated sexual and violent recidivism rates using combined VASOR-2 and SOTIPS risk/need categories are shown in Appendix C.

Severity Factors Checklist

The Severity Factors Checklist is designed for describing offense severity. The four Severity Factors Checklist items pertain to sexual intrusiveness, force used, physical victim harm, and victim vulnerability characteristics related to the individual's index sexual offenses. The severity of an individual's sexual offenses, in most jurisdictions, influences correctional placement and management decisions. In other research, we are examining the degree to which Severity Factors Checklist items and other variables will predict the severity of sexual offenses committed by sexual recidivists.

Interpretation of Scores

Risk assessment is a key task in the effective management of sex offenders. Risk assessments help professionals make decisions about sentencing, community registration and notification, treatment, supervision, release from detention, and discharge from services. In order to make these types of decisions, professionals commonly seek answers to one or more of the following five questions (McGrath, 1992).

1. What is the probability of a reoffense?
2. What degree of harm would most likely result from a reoffense?
3. What are the conditions under which a reoffense would be most likely to occur?
4. Who would be the likely victims of a reoffense?
5. When would a reoffense be most likely to occur?

The VASOR-2 is concerned with helping professionals answer the first two of these questions. The Reoffense Risk Scale is the focus of the first question, which concerns reoffense probability. The Severity

Factors Checklist is the focus of the second question, which concerns victim harm. The Severity Factors Checklist, however, does not directly account for psychological victim harm and cannot be used to predict the severity of future sexual offenses.

This manual does not recommend a formula for weighting the relative importance of offenders' scores on the Reoffense Risk Scale and the severity indicators listed on the Severity Factors Checklist. Evaluators and jurisdictions must make these types of determinations locally. In general, however, offenders who score in the "lower" ranges on the Reoffense Risk Scale and commit "lower" severity offenses listed on the Severity Factors Checklist, from a community safety perspective, are typically considered appropriate for community supervision and treatment. Offenders who score in the "higher" ranges on the Reoffense Risk Scale and commit "higher" severity offenses listed on the Severity Factors Checklist, from a community safety perspective, are initially often considered inappropriate for community supervision and treatment.

The tables in Appendix B show Reoffense Risk Scale risk categories and estimated recidivism rates based on Vermont norms. Recidivism was defined as a new charge for a sexual or violent (including sexual) offense. The definition of a new sexual offense included a charge for a violation of supervision conditions if the incident could have been charged as a criminal sexual offense.

These Vermont norms were based on data from the Vermont 2011 sample, which is described in Appendix A. This was an unselected (i.e., consecutive cases) routine correctional sample of sex offenders, which could be viewed as roughly representative of all adjudicated sex offenders (Phenix, Helmus, & Hanson, 2012). This is opposed to samples that are preselected, for example, on treatment need, psychiatric disorder, or level of risk. Outside of Vermont, these norms will be most applicable in assessing risk among routine correctional samples of sex offenders in jurisdictions with similar sexual recidivism base rates as those in the Vermont 2011 sample.

The four Reoffense Risk Scale risk categories (low, moderate-low, moderate-high, and high) shown in Appendix B, Tables 3 and 5, are relative rankings. These relative ranking categories may be useful for allocating treatment, supervision, and management resources. Following the risk principle, higher risk offenders should be subject to more intensive interventions and lower risk offenders to less intensive interventions (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Hanson, Bourgon, Helmus, & Hodgson, 2009).

The estimated recidivism rates reported in Appendix B should be used with caution. Reoffense rates for individuals scoring similarly on risk instruments commonly vary among studies, jurisdictions, and over time. Charge and conviction rates are dependent on variables such as the characteristics of the offenders being studied and the nature of local reporting, investigation, and prosecution practices. In addition, detected rates of reoffending underestimate the true rates of reoffending but by unknown magnitudes. Jurisdictions that gain experience using the VASOR-2 are encouraged to develop their own local norms.

It is also important to note that relative rankings and the estimated recidivism rates shown in Appendix B are based on group averages. Group averages may under- or over-represent the true risk of an individual sex offender depending on factors not taken into consideration by the VASOR-2.

Although the predictive accuracy of the VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale is similar to that of other sex offender risk-assessment instruments (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2009), the estimated sexual and violent recidivism rates shown in Appendix B are based on scale development with a construction sample. Fairer comparisons of VASOR-2 to other instruments require replication studies.

The VASOR-2 has limited value for use in making decisions about allowing an offender to reside with children. The estimated 5-year recidivism rates reported in this manual were based on the Vermont 2011 sample. Child sexual abusers in this sample were typically under community correctional supervision and had conditions prohibiting them from living with or having unsupervised contact with children.

VASOR-2 and SOTIPS Combination

The VASOR-2, which is a static risk instrument, can be used as a stand-alone risk instrument or in conjunction with the Sex Offender Treatment and Intervention Scale (SOTIPS), which is a dynamic risk instrument. The SOTIPS scoring manual and a description of its psychometric properties can be found elsewhere (McGrath, Cumming, & Lasher, 2013; McGrath, Lasher, & Cumming, 2011, 2012).

The SOTIPS is composed of 16 dynamic (potentially changeable) risk items. It is provider scored, statistically derived, and designed to aid clinicians, correctional caseworkers, and probation and parole officers in assessing risk, treatment and supervision needs, and progress among adult male sex offenders. Evaluators score the individual at intake and, thereafter, as frequently as every six months. Using the VASOR-2 and SOTIPS in combination can add incremental predictive validity to each measure and can assist in assessing how an offender's risk to reoffend may change over time. Appendix C shows Vermont norms for 3-year estimated sexual and violent recidivism rates for VASOR-2 and SOTIPS combined risk categories. The cautions described in this manual for using the VASOR-2 in applied practice settings also apply to use of VASOR-2 and SOTIPS combined risk scores as well.

Summary

The VASOR-2 can be used as an aid in making sex offender placement, treatment, and supervision decisions, alone or in combination with the SOTIPS, a dynamic risk measure. It is important to note that the VASOR-2 does not provide a comprehensive survey of all factors relevant to sex offending. Professional judgment and other relevant tools should be used in the decision making process.

Scoring Instructions

General Scoring Rules

The VASOR-2 is designed to be scored based upon a file review. The file review must include a review of the offender's official criminal record. Ideally, the scoring process includes an interview with the offender, but an interview is not necessary. If an offender is interviewed, and he provides credible self-report information that subsequently becomes part of his file, this information may be used to score the VASOR-2.

If there is **missing information** about how to score the substance abuse, residence, employment, or treatment history items, assume the risk factor is absent and give the lowest logical score. If **information about a risk factor is not certain**, score the factor as present if the evidence meets the "more likely than not" standard.

The **estimated 5-year group recidivism rates** reported in this manual are calculated based on sexual and violent recidivism events that were detected within a 5-year follow-up period that started on the date an offender was first placed in the community following his index sex offense conviction. The first community placement date for an offender who is placed in the community immediately after being sentenced for his index sex offense is his index sex offense conviction date. The first community placement date for an offender who is incarcerated immediately after being convicted for an index sex offense is his first date of release to the community after the index sex offense conviction date.

A **sex offense conviction** is defined as a formal finding of guilt by a court or an official correctional agency for a sexual or sexually related offense. Sexually related means that the underlying nature of the offense was sexual, such as when an offender is convicted of simple assault, but the original charge was sexual assault, and the sexual elements of the offense were not redacted from the official basis for the conviction. Another example of a sexually related offense would be where an offender is found guilty of Breaking and Entering into a residence when it is clear that his plan was to sexually assault an occupant in the residence. A sex offense conviction as defined here also includes sexual and sexually related institutional rule violations and probation, parole, and conditional release violations resulting in a conviction or finding of guilt for behaviors that could have been charged as a criminal sex offense. Additionally, a sex offense conviction as defined here includes sex offenses committed by individuals with severe mental illness or developmental disabilities if the offense would have likely resulted in a criminal conviction were it not for the offender's serious mental impairment. Do not count state child protection agency substantiations.

The **index sex offense** is generally the most recent sex offense for which the offender was convicted. **Charges** for a sex offense are not counted. The index offense may involve a single offense or multiple sex offenses, which are called an index cluster. An **index cluster** occurs when an offender commits a number of sex offenses, over a protracted period, or in a spree of offending prior to being officially sanctioned (e.g., arrested, charged, cited) for sex offenses for which he is eventually convicted. Even though the offender may have a number of sentencing dates, possibly in multiple jurisdictions, the subsequent sentencing dates would constitute an "index cluster." These "spree" offenses would group together (the early ones and the last), and they all become the "index cluster" with none considered as "prior" to another. This is because the offender has not been "caught" and sanctioned for the earlier offenses and then "chosen" to reoffend in spite of the sanction. Furthermore, historical offenses that are detected after the offender is convicted of a more recent sex offense would be considered part of the index sex offense (**pseudo-recidivism**) and become part of the index cluster (definitions modified from Harris et al., 2003, p. 19-21).

Prior sex offenses are generally those for which the offender was convicted prior to being convicted for the index sex offense. Exceptions are that prior sex offenses do not include index cluster or pseudo-recidivism offenses. Another exception occurs when an offender is sanctioned (e.g., arrested, charged, cited) for a sex offense (for which he is eventually convicted), and while on community release for that sex offense, commits

a new sex offense (for which he is eventually convicted). In this case, the first sex offense would count as a prior sex offense and the most recent sex offense would count as the index sex offense, even if the offender was sentenced for both sex offenses on the same sentencing date. Priors include juvenile convictions.

If an evaluator is scoring an individual for a **pre-adjudication evaluation**, that is, before the individual is convicted of a sex offense, the evaluator should note that the score would be valid only if the individual were to be eventually adjudicated guilty.

When scoring the **Severity Factors Checklist**, consider all of the offender's index sex offenses. For checklist items #1, #2, and #3, check the box for each item that represents the most serious offense elements. For checklist item #4, check all of the Victim Vulnerability characteristics that apply.

For items that involve scoring the **offender's behavior during a specified time period** (e.g., Substance Abuse During Past Five Years and Address Changes During Past Year), score for "street time" before the date of the index sex offense conviction. **Street time** is the actual time an offender was in the community, as opposed to in prison or a secure residential facility, before the index sex offense conviction date.

Incarcerated means the person was placed in prison or some other type of secure facility that prevented him from having the opportunity to reoffend in the community.

A **score sheet** can be found on the last page of this manual. On this score sheet, the total Reoffense Risk Scale score is the sum of the twelve items that compose the scale. The Severity Factors Checklist is simply a checklist to identify evident severity factors. Circle the Reoffense Risk Scale "Total Score" and "Risk Category" on the score sheet table to show the score and relative risk category associated with that score.

Rescoring Criteria

Evaluators should update an offender's score on the VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale for only one of two reasons. These are if: (a) the offender is convicted of a new sex offense, or (b) the evaluator detects an inaccuracy in an original score.

If an offender is convicted of committing a new index sex offense, the evaluator should rescore the VASOR-2, and the original index sex offense conviction would become a prior sex offense conviction.

In the case of a detected scoring inaccuracy, if an evaluator, for example, originally scored an offender as not having any male victims and later learned that the offender sexually offended against a male victim prior to the index sex offense conviction, then the evaluator should rescore the individual as having a male victim and recalculate the total Reoffense Risk Scale score.

Evaluators should not score events that occurred after an offender's index sex offense conviction date. For example, post-index sex offense conviction events such as substance abuse problems, residence instability, unemployment, convictions for new non-sexual criminal offenses and violations of conditional release, and termination from sex offender treatment, would not change the offender's score. This is because these post sex offense conviction events were not factored into VASOR-2 risk estimates.

VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale risk estimates were determined by establishing offenders' risk scores as of the date of first community placement after the index sexual offense conviction and then examining how well the scores predicted sexual reoffending at 5-year follow-up. Estimates did not factor in offender behavior during the follow-up period. As described earlier, evaluators can use a dynamic risk instrument, such as the SOTIPS, in conjunction with the VASOR-2 to assist in assessing how an offender's risk to reoffend may change over time.

Scoring Rules for Individual Items

Reoffense Risk Scale

1. Age at Community Placement

Use official court, police, and correctional records and credible offender and collateral reports to score this item.

Basic scoring rules:

- a. If the offender is **age 18 to 34** at first placement date in the community following the index sex offense conviction, score a “3” on this item.
- b. If the offender is **age 35 to 54** at first placement date in the community following the index sex offense conviction, score a “2” on this item.
- c. If the offender is **age 55 or older** at first placement date in the community following the index sex offense conviction, score a “0” on this item.

Additional scoring rules:

- Score only adult males who have been convicted of one or more qualifying sex offenses and committed at least one of these sex offenses after their 18th birthday.
- When determining the offender’s age, use complete years only; do not round up to the nearest whole year.
- If the offender is placed in the community directly after being sentenced for the index sex offense, use the offender’s age at the sentencing date to score this item.
- If the offender is incarcerated directly after being sentenced for the index sex offense and the release date is specified, use the offender’s age as of the specified release date. Specify how this item was scored when reporting results.
- If the offender is incarcerated directly after being sentenced for the index sex offense and the release date is uncertain, use the offender’s age at the earliest logical time of release, taking into account information such as the offender’s minimum release date, treatment expectations, and local policies related to community placement. Describe how the offender’s score on this item would change according to his age at the date of release when reporting results.

2. Prior Sex Offense Convictions

Use official court, police, and correctional records and credible offender and collateral reports to score this item.

Basic scoring rules:

- a. If the offender has **no prior sex offense convictions**, score a “0” on this item.
- b. If the offender has only **one prior sex offense conviction**, score a “2” on this item.
- c. If the offender has **two or more prior sex offense convictions against two or more victims**, score a “3” on this item.

Additional scoring rules:

- Do not count index sex offense convictions (see definitions of index sex offense, prior sex offenses, index cluster, and pseudo-recidivism on pages 7-8).
- Count prior adult and juvenile sex offense convictions. Convictions include deferred sentences for sex offenses and diversionary sentences for sex offenses resulting in referrals to a formal diversion program. Juvenile convictions must be formal convictions adjudicated in a juvenile, family, or criminal court.
- Count as **one prior sex offense conviction** multiple prior sex offense convictions against the same victim if they all had the same sentencing date and meet the definition of an index cluster.
- Count as **two or more prior sex offense convictions** prior convictions for two or more sex offenses involving at least two victims even if the sentencing date for the multiple offenses is the same.
- Count “sexually related” convictions. Sexually related means that the underlying nature of the offense was sexual, such as when an offender is convicted of simple assault, but the original charge was sexual assault and the sexual elements of the offense have not been redacted from the official basis for the conviction.
- Count sexual and sexually related institutional rule violations and probation, parole, and conditional release violations resulting in a finding of guilt for behaviors that could have been charged as a criminal sex offense. For example, a formal prison disciplinary finding of guilt for intentionally masturbating in front of a correctional officer would count as a conviction, but it would not count if the behavior was not intentionally directed at the officer. Consensual sexual activity among inmates in prison would not count as a sex offense.
- Count as convictions all sex offenses committed by individuals with severe mental illness or developmental disabilities if the offense would have likely resulted in a criminal conviction were it not for the offender’s serious mental impairment.
- Do not count:
 - criminal arrests or charges
 - substantiations of child sexual abuse by a state child protection agency
 - sex offender registry violations, such as Failure to Register as a sex offender

Scoring examples:

1. In 1995, the state child protection agency substantiated that the offender sexually molested a young girl, but he was never charged for this offense. He was charged for sexually assaulting another young girl in 2000, but the charge was dismissed. He was convicted for a sexually assaulting a third child in 2005.

Score “0” – no prior sex offense convictions. The offender has no prior sex offense convictions. State **child protection agency substantiations** and **charges** do not count.

2. The offender sexually assaulted one victim in 2006 and another victim in 2007. Authorities detected and charged him for these two offenses in 2008, and he was convicted of both offenses in 2009.

Score “0” – no prior sex offense convictions. These two sex offense convictions are considered an **index cluster**. He committed more than one sex offense (a “spree”) over a protracted period of time prior to being officially sanctioned (e.g., arrested, charged, cited) for sex offenses for which he was eventually convicted. The “spree” offenses are group together, and they all become the “index cluster” with none considered as “prior” to another. This is because the offender has not been “caught” and sanctioned for the earlier offense and then “chosen” to reoffend in spite of the sanction.

3. The offender sexually assaulted a victim in 2005 and was convicted of this sexual assault in 2006. In 2007, another victim came forward and said the offender sexually assaulted him in 2004. The offender was convicted of the 2004 sexual assault in 2008.

Score “0” – no prior sex offense convictions. These two sex offense convictions are considered an **index cluster**, because the 2004 sexual assault, which resulted in a 2008 conviction, is considered **pseudo-recidivism**. Historical offenses that are detected after the offender is convicted of a more recent sex offense are considered part of the index sex offense (pseudo-recidivism) and become part of the index cluster.

4. The offender was charged with sexually assaulting a victim in 2005. While on community release for this offense, he was charged with a new sex offense in 2006. He was convicted of both these sex offenses on the same sentencing date in 2007.

Score “2” – one prior sex offense conviction. The first sex offense in 2005 counts as a prior sex offense and the most recent sex offense in 2006 counts as the index sex offense. This is because the offender was “caught” and sanctioned for the first offense and then “chose” to reoffend in spite of the sanction, and both offenses resulted in convictions.

5. On April 4, 2000, the offender was convicted in juvenile court of two counts of sexual assault for sexually abusing his niece. He committed these sex offenses when he was age 15. In 2010, he was convicted of sexually assaulting his nephew.

Score “2” – one prior sex offense conviction. Count as one prior sex offense conviction multiple prior sex offense convictions against the same victim if they all had the same sentencing date. **Juvenile sex offenses** that result in formal convictions count as prior sex offense convictions.

6. The offender has two convictions for molesting two children in 2005 and one conviction in 2010 for molesting one child.

Score “3” – two or more prior sex offense convictions. Count as two or more prior sex offense convictions prior convictions for two or more sex offenses involving two or more victims even if the sentencing date for the multiple offenses is the same.

3. Prior Sentencing Dates

Use official court, police, and correctional records to score this item. Self-reports may not be used to score this item. Scoring rules for this item are intended to match the Static-99 coding rules for the same item (Harris et al., 2003).

Basic scoring rules:

- a. If the offender's criminal record indicates **three or less prior sentencing dates** prior to the Index Offense, score a "0" on this item.
- b. If the offender's criminal record indicates **four or more prior sentencing dates** prior to the Index Offense, score a "1" on this item.

Additional scoring rules:

- Do not count the index sentencing date.
- Count only distinct occasions on which the offender was sentenced for criminal offenses. The number of charges and convictions does not matter, only the number of sentencing dates.
- Count juvenile sex offense convictions, which for this item follows Static-99 coding rules and includes placement in residential care setting for a sex offense.
- Count violations of community release (e.g., probation, parole, bail, etc.) only if the behavior could be charged as a new criminal offense.
- Count an "undesirable discharge" given to a member of the military as the direct result of criminal behavior that could have resulted in a criminal charge were the offender not in the military.
- Count sanctions given to a member of the military resulting in incarceration in a Military Brig or its equivalent for a criminal offense, but not for a non-criminal military offense such as failure of duty or insubordination.
- Count suspended or deferred sentences.
- Count diversionary sentences resulting in referrals to a formal diversion program.
- Do not count:
 - institutional rule violations, including sex offenses, unless they resulted in a criminal conviction
 - "technical" violations of community release (e.g., probation, parole, bail, etc.), unless the violation behavior could have been charged as a new criminal offense
 - convictions overturned on appeal
 - minor offenses that are not serious enough to permit a sentence of community supervision, custody, or incarceration
 - driving offenses, unless they are associated with serious penalties, such as driving while intoxicated or reckless driving causing death or injury
 - failure to appear for sentencing

4. Any Violations of Probation, Parole or Other Release Conditions During Past Five Years

Use official court, police, and correctional records and credible offender and collateral reports to score this item.

Basic scoring rules:

- a. If the offender has **no convictions** for probation, parole, or other conditional release violations during the five years of street time before, or on the same date as, the index sex offense conviction date, score a “0” on this item.
- b. If the offender has **any convictions** for probation, parole, or other conditional release violations during the five years of street time before, or on the same date as, the index sex offense conviction date, score a “1” on this item.

Additional scoring rules:

- **Street time** is the actual time an offender was in the community, as opposed to in prison or a secure residential facility, before the index sex offense conviction date.
- Count as violations any convictions for violations of family court orders and violations of criminal court orders, such as violations of abuse prevention orders.
- Count failure to appear if an arrest warrant was issued.
- Count failure to complete a diversionary sentence, if failure resulted in the imposition of a sentence.
- If the offender committed the index sexual offense while on conditional release, count as a violation for the purpose of scoring this item.
- If the offender is incarcerated, score for the five-year period of street time that the offender was in the community prior to the current incarceration.
- Count convictions for violation behavior that occurred during the five years of street time before the index sex offense conviction date, even if the conviction date for the violation behavior followed the index sex offense conviction date.
- Do not count violation behavior that occurred after an offender’s index sex offense conviction date.

5. Any Convictions for Non-Contact Sex Offenses

Use official court, police or correctional records to score this item. Do not count self-reports in this section. Scoring rules for this item are intended to match the Static-99 coding rules for the same item (Harris et al., 2003).

Non-contact sex offenses include:

- exhibitionism and public masturbation
- possessing obscene material
- obscene telephone calls
- voyeurism
- illicit sexual use of the Internet
- sexual harassment

Basic scoring rules:

- a. If the offender has **no convictions for a non-contact sex offense**, score a “0” on this item.
- b. If the offender’s criminal record indicates **one or more separate convictions for a non-contact sex offense**, score a “1” on this item.

Additional scoring rules:

- Count index and prior non-contact sex offense convictions.
- Count non-contact sex offenses that were pled-down and resulted in a conviction for another type of offense. For example, if the offender was charged with public masturbation, but the case was pled-down and he was convicted of Disorderly Conduct, it would count as a non-contact sex offense conviction.
- Do not count institutional rule violations or technical violations of community release (e.g., probation or parole) for non-contact sex offenses, unless it resulted in a criminal conviction, even though such behavior could count as prior sex offense on Item 2, Prior Sex Offense Convictions.
- Do not count sex offenses in which the offender intended to make contact with the victim but did not succeed, such as arranging to meet a minor for sexual contact but police thwarted the contact.
- Do not count pimping and other prostitution related offenses, such as soliciting a prostitute, promoting prostitution, soliciting for the purposes of prostitution, and living off the avails of prostitution.
- Do not count non-contact sex offense convictions if they arose as the result of a plea bargain in which the original offense was a contact one. An occurrence of this nature would be considered a contact offense.

6. Any Male Victims

Use official records and credible offender, victim, and other collateral reports to score this item. This means you may use all credible information to code victims on this item, even if the offender was never convicted for the offense. Scoring rules for this item are intended to match the Static-99 coding rules for the same item (Harris et al., 2003).

Basic scoring rules:

- a. If the offender has **no male victims**, score a “0” on this item.
- b. If the offender has **any male victims**, score a “1” on this item. Use any credible information, including self-report, victim accounts, and collateral contacts, indicating that the offender has committed a sex offense against a male victim. The offender need not have been arrested or convicted for an offense to count on this item.

Additional scoring rules:

- Count intentional contact and non-contact sex offenses against a male victim.
- In the case of a non-contact sex offense (e.g., exhibitionism) involving a mixed gender group, score as female victims unless there is evidence the offender was specifically targeting males.
- Do not count “accidental victims.” Accidental victims are individuals who have observed a sex offense but the offender had no intention to commit a sex offense against the individual, such as a male observing an offender expose himself to a female.
- Do not count victims of Category “B” sex offenses, such as consenting sex with an adult in public places, soliciting a prostitute, possessing child pornography, and statutory rape.
- Do not count victims of non-sex offenses.
- Do not count victim information on sex offenses against animals.
- Do not count victim information derived solely from polygraph examination unless it is corroborated by other sources or the offender provides sufficient information to support a new criminal investigation.

7. Relationship to Victims

Use official records and credible offender, victim, and other collateral reports to score this item. This means you may use all credible information to code victims on this item, even if the offender was never convicted for the offense.

Basic scoring rules:

- a. If the **victim was a relative or acquaintance who had been living in the same residence as the offender for 30 consecutive days or more immediately prior** to the sex offense, score a “0” on this item.
- b. If the **victim was a relative or acquaintance who had not been living in the same residence as the offender for 30 consecutive days or more immediately prior** to the sex offense, score a “1” on this item.
- c. If the **victim was a stranger**, that is, did not know the offender for more than 24 hours prior to the sex offense, score a “3” on this item.

Additional scoring rules:

- If the offender has prior sex offenses or multiple sex offense victims, score the highest score possible. For example, if the offender has “acquaintance” and “stranger” victims, score “3” for stranger victims.
- Do not count victims of Category “B” sex offenses, such as consenting sex with an adult in public places, soliciting a prostitute, possessing child pornography and statutory rape.
- Do not count “accidental victims.” Accidental victims are individuals who have observed a sex offense but the offender had no intention to commit a sex offense against the individual, such as a male observing an offender expose himself to a female.
- Do not count victim information on sex offenses involving animals.

8. Offense-Related Sexual Fixation

Use official records and credible offender, victim, and other collateral reports to score this item. This means you may use all credible information to code victims on this item, even if the offender was never convicted for the offense. Also consider available sexual arousal assessment data, such as phallometric and viewing time measures.

Basic scoring rules:

- a. If the offender has **one sex offense victim and his sexual interests are predominately focused on consenting, age appropriate sexual relationships**, score a “0” on this item.
- b. If the offender has **two to four sex offense victims and a history of consenting, age appropriate sexual relationships**, or has undergone any sexual arousal assessment (i.e., phallometric or viewing time test data) in which his **arousal to offense-related themes was about the same as his arousal to non-deviant themes**, score a “2” on this item.
- c. If the offender has **five or more sex offense victims**, or has undergone any sexual arousal assessment in which his **arousal to offense-related sexual themes was greater than his arousal to appropriate sexual themes, or has minimal or no history of mutually consenting, age-appropriate sexual relationships**, score a “3” on this item.

Additional scoring rules:

- Take into consideration the age of the offender and the opportunity that he has had to engage in age appropriate sexual relationships. For example, if the offender is relatively young and has had minimal opportunity to have age appropriate sexually relationships, do not assume the presence of only offense-related sexual interests.
- Do not count victims of Category “B” sex offenses, such as consenting sex with an adult in public places, soliciting a prostitute, possessing child pornography and statutory rape.

9. Substance Abuse During the Past Five Years in Community

Use official records and credible offender, victim, and other collateral reports to score this item.

Basic scoring rules:

- a. If alcohol or drug use has **not interfered** with the offender's functioning during the five years of street time before the index sex offense conviction date, score a "0" on this item.
- b. If alcohol or drug use has caused **some legal or occasional social problems** with the offender's functioning during the five years of street time before the index sex offense conviction date, score a "1" on this item.
- c. If alcohol or drug use has caused **serious life disruption** with the offender's functioning during the five years of street time before the index sex offense conviction date (e.g., played an important role in the commission of a sex offense or caused serious and frequent life disruption such as alcohol-related convictions or job loss), score a "2" on this item.

Additional scoring rules:

- **Street time** is the actual time an offender was in the community, as opposed to in prison or a secure residential facility, before the index sex offense conviction date.
- Any substance use for which the possession or use could result in criminal charges should receive a score of "1" or "2".
- Do not count giving a noxious substance (alcohol, narcotics, or other drug) in order to impair a victim.
- Do not count alcohol or drug use that occurred after an offender's index sex offense conviction date.

10. Address Changes During Past Year

Use official records and credible offender, victim, and other collateral reports to score this item.

Basic scoring rules:

- a. If the offender has had **one or no address changes** during the one year of street time before the index sex offense conviction date, score “0” on this item.
- b. If the offender has had **two or more address changes** during the one year of street time before the index sex offense conviction date, score the offender “2” on this item.

Additional scoring rules:

- **Street time** is the actual time an offender was in the community, as opposed to in prison or a secure residential facility, before the index sex offense conviction date.
- Do not count address changes that were required by the court, probation and parole, state child protection services, or other governmental agencies in connection to pending charges of the index sex offense (e.g., the court requires an offender who sexually abused a family member to move out of his house).
- Do not count address changes that occurred after an offender’s index sex offense conviction date.

11. Time Employed or in School During Past Year in Community

Use official records and credible offender, victim, and other collateral reports to score this item.

Basic scoring rules:

- a. If the offender has been **employed and/or in school 60% of the time or more** during the one year of street time before the index sex offense conviction date, score a “0” on this item.
- b. If the offender has been **employed and/or in school 59% of the time or less** during the one year of street time before the index sex offense conviction date, score a “1” on this item.

The percent of time employed and/or in school should be based on full-time employment or school enrollment. “Full-time” refers to the total number of hours in a workweek or amount of coursework in an academic term. In the United States, this typically means a 40-hour workweek or a 12-credit course-load, but the norms for the jurisdiction in which the offender is being scored should be used when defining “full-time.”

Additional scoring rules:

- **Street time** is the actual time an offender was in the community, as opposed to in prison or a secure residential facility, before the index sex offense conviction date.
- If offender was retired, disabled, or a homemaker during the past year, score “0” on this item.
- Do not count employment that is criminal in nature (e.g., drug dealing or prostitution).
- Do not count time employed or in school after an offender’s index sex offense conviction date.

12. Sex Offender Treatment History

Use official records and credible offender and other collateral reports to score this item.

Basic scoring rules:

- a. If the offender meets any of the following criteria, score a “0” on this item:
 1. had **never attended sex offender treatment** as of the date of his first community placement after the index sex offense conviction, or
 2. had **no prior sex offense convictions** and was **incarcerated immediately after conviction for index sex offense, entered incarcerated sex offender treatment, and treatment status at date of first release was “treatment completer” or “active treatment participant”**

- b. If the offender meets any of the following criteria, score a “1” on this item:
 1. had been **convicted of a new sex offense during or after having attended sex offender treatment, or**
 2. was **incarcerated immediately after conviction for index sex offense, entered incarcerated sex offender treatment, and treatment status at date of release was “terminated” or “dropped out”**

Definitions:

- “Sex offender treatment” is treatment by a trained mental health clinician that targets problem areas directly linked to the offender’s sexual offending behavior, such as offense supportive attitudes, deviant sexual arousal, emotional dysregulation, and intimacy deficits. Do not count treatment that has focused solely on problems that are not directly linked to sexual offending, such as depression, anxiety, marital distress, and self-esteem. Do not count completion of a psycho-educational or self-help program as sex offender treatment.
- “Active treatment participant” is an individual who was attending sex offender treatment at the time of community release.
- “Treatment completer” is an individual who had met a sex offender treatment program’s criteria for completing the program.
- “Terminated” means the individual was terminated from a sex offender treatment program for failing to meet the program’s standards.
- “Dropped out” means the individual dropped out of a sex offender treatment program before completing the program.

Additional scoring rules:

- An incarcerated offender should be provisionally score “0” if he would otherwise be scored “0” and his treatment status will be unknown until he reaches his community release date.
- An incarcerated offender should be designated a “treatment completer” or “active treatment participant” if that was his status at the time of first release, even if he previously had been terminated or dropped out of treatment.

Severity Factors Checklist

1. Most Sexually Intrusive Index Sex Offense

Use official records and credible offender, victim, and other collateral reports.

Basic scoring rules:

Check only one box. If the index sex offense involved multiple victims or multiple offenses, score the most sexually intrusive index sex offense.

- a. The offense was a **non-contact offense**. A **non-contact offense** is a sexual offense during which the offender does not have physical contact with the victim, such as exhibitionism, public masturbation, obscene telephone calling, voyeurism, child pornography and non-contact Internet crimes. Do not count failure to register as a sex offender.
- b. The offense was a **fondling offense**. Fondling is a contact sex offense that does not involve any of the behaviors described in the following three categories.
- c. The offense involved **digital penetration, fellatio, or cunnilingus**. Digital penetration, fellatio, or cunnilingus involves the offender putting one or more of his fingers in the victim's vagina or anus or any contact of the offender's mouth with the victim's vagina, penis, or anus. It includes the victim being manipulated or forced to engage in any of these behaviors with the offender or another individual.
- d. The offense involved **actual or attempted penile penetration of the vagina or anus**. Actual or attempted penile penetration of the vagina or anus is any contact of the offender's penis, or an object, with the victim's vagina or anus. It includes the victim being manipulated or forced to engage in any of these behaviors with the offender or another individual.
- e. The offense involved **bizarre or ritualistic behavior**. Bizarre or ritualistic behavior includes such activities as bondage, urinating or defecating on the victim, and torture.

Additional scoring rules:

- Count only index sex offense victims.
- Do not count individuals portrayed in child pornography.
- Do not count offenses involving animals.

2. Most Force Used During Index Sex Offenses

Use official records and credible offender, victim, and other collateral reports.

Basic scoring rules:

Check only one box. If the index sex offense involved multiple victims or multiple offenses, score the most force used during index sexual offenses.

- a. The offense was a **non-contact offense**. A non-contact offense is a sexual offense during which the offender does not have physical contact with the victim, such as exhibitionism, public masturbation, obscene telephone calling, voyeurism, child pornography and non-contact Internet crimes.
- b. The offense was a **contact offense**. A contact offense is any sex offense in which the offender has physical contact with the victim but does not use the degree of force described in either of the following two categories.
- c. The offense involved **force greater than necessary to gain compliance or clear threats of physical harm to victim or others**. Force greater than necessary to gain compliance or clear threats of physical harm to victim or others includes force that was clearly greater than necessary to gain the victim's compliance, or involved realistic threats of physical harm to either the victim or others to frighten and gain the victim's compliance. Count if the offender kidnapped the victim. Using one's size, position of authority, or pinning the victim to gain compliance does not by itself count as greater than necessary force.
- d. The offense involved **use of potentially deadly weapon**. Use of potentially deadly weapon includes the threat or actual use of any weapon that poses realistic physical harm to the victim's life. Potentially deadly weapons include a gun, knife, club, and the offender's fist or feet, if they are used in such a manner as to pose a realistic loss of life to the victim. Do not count possession of a weapon, unless the victim was aware of the weapon. For example, if the offender had a knife in his pocket but never displayed or mentioned it to the victim, it would not count.

Additional scoring rules:

- Count only index sex offense victims.
- Do not count individuals portrayed in child pornography.
- Do not count offenses involving animals.

3. Most Physical Harm to Index Sex Offense Victims

Use official records and credible offender, victim, and other collateral reports.

Basic scoring rules:

Check only one box. If the index sex offense involved multiple victims or multiple offenses, score the most physical harm to index sex offense victim.

- a. The victim **did not require any medical treatment**. No medical treatment required means that the victim did not suffer any physical injury.
- b. The victim **sustained an injury but it did not require medical attention**. Injury not requiring formal medical attention includes minor bruises, scratches, and abrasions for which the victim did not need the attention of trained medical personnel.
- c. The victim was **treated by trained medical personnel either in a hospital or outpatient setting and released**. Treated for injury and released means treatment by trained medical personnel either in a hospital or outpatient setting, after which the victim was released. It does not include a medical exam performed solely for the purpose of obtaining evidence about a sex offense. It does not include preventative treatment of a sexually transmitted or other disease unless the offender knowingly exposed the victim to the disease.
- d. The victim was **hospitalized**. Hospitalized means admitted to a hospital bed for the care of physical injuries sustained during a sex offense.
- e. The victim **died** as a direct result of injuries sustained during the index sexual offense.

Additional scoring rules:

- Count only index sex offense victims.
- Count if the victim received medical treatment for alcohol or other drug impairment and the offender provided the victim the alcohol or drugs.
- Do not count the transmission of a sexually transmitted disease unless there is evidence that it is more likely than not that the offender knowingly exposed the victim to the disease.
- Do not count the victim becoming pregnant unless there is evidence that it is more likely than not that the offender knowingly tried to get the victim pregnant.
- Do not count individuals portrayed in child pornography.
- Do not count offenses involving animals.

4. Vulnerability Characteristics of the Index Offense Victims

Use official records and credible offender, victim, and other collateral reports.

Basic scoring rules:

Check all the boxes that describe the relevant victim vulnerability characteristics. If the index sex offense involved multiple victims or multiple offenses, use all of these to score this item.

- a. Check box if the victim was **age 11 or younger** when the offender began sexually offending the victim.
- b. Check box if the victim was **age 65 or older** when the offender sexually offended the victim.
- c. Check box if the victim was **developmentally disabled**, which is defined as having IQ of 70 or below or receiving developmental services from an organization that serves individuals with developmental disabilities.
- d. Check box if the victim had a **major mental illness** at the time of the abuse, and the illness seriously compromised his or her ability to consent to sexual activity, defend him or herself from the abuse, or provide a credible abuse report to authorities.
- e. Check box if the victim had a **serious physical disability** (e.g., confined to a wheel chair, blind, hearing impaired) at the time of the abuse, and the disability seriously compromised his or her ability to defend him or herself from the abuse or provide a credible abuse report to authorities.
- f. Check box if the victim had **severe alcohol or drug intoxication** at the time of the abuse, and the intoxication seriously compromised his or her ability to consent to sexual activity, defend him or herself from the abuse, or provide a credible abuse report to authorities.
- g. Check box if **none of the above** victim vulnerability characteristics are evident.

Additional scoring rules:

- Count only index sex offense victims.
- When determining the age of the victim, use complete years only; do not round up to the nearest whole year. For example, age 11 years and 10 months is counted as age 11.
- Do not count individuals portrayed in child pornography.
- Do not count offenses involving animals.

References

- Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2010). *The psychology of criminal conduct* (5th ed.). New Providence, NJ: LexisNexis.
- Harris, A., Phenix, A., Hanson, R. K., & Thornton, D. (2003). *Static-99 coding rules: Revised 2003*. Ottawa: Department of the Solicitor General of Canada.
- Hanson, R. K., Bourgon, G., Helmus, L., & Hodgson, S. (2009). The principles of effective correctional treatment also apply to sexual offenders. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *36*, 865-891.
- Langton, C. M. (2003). Contrasting approaches to risk assessment with adult male sexual offenders: An evaluation of recidivism prediction schemes and the utility of supplementary clinical information for enhancing predictive accuracy. Dissertations Abstracts International, 64(04), 1907B. (UMI No. NQ78052).
- Langton, C. M., Barbaree, H. E., Harkins, L., Seto, M. C., & Peacock, E. J. (2002, October). *Evaluating the predictive validity of seven risk assessment instruments for sexual offenders*. Paper presented at the 21st Annual Research and Treatment Conference of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
- Phenix, A., Doren, D., Helmus, L., Hanson, R. K., & Thornton, D. (2009). *Coding rules for Static-2002*. Ottawa, Ontario: Public Safety Canada.
- Phenix, A., Helmus, L., & Hanson, R. K. (2012, July 26). Static-99R and Static-2002R evaluators workbook. Retrieved from: http://www.static99.org/pdffdocs/Static-99RandStatic-2002R_EvaluatorsWorkbook2012-07-26.pdf
- McGrath, R. J. (1992). Five critical questions: Assessing sex offender risk. *Perspectives*, *16* (3), 6-9.
- McGrath, R. J., Cumming, G. F., Hoke, S. E., & Bonn-Miller, M. O. (2007). Outcomes in a community sex offender treatment program: A comparison between polygraphed and matched non-polygraphed offenders. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, *19*, 381-393.
- McGrath, R. J., Cumming, G. F., & Lasher, M. P. (2013). *Sex Offender Treatment Intervention and Progress Scale (SOTIPS) Manual*. Middlebury, VT: Author.
- McGrath, R. J., Cumming, G. F., Livingston, J. A., Hoke, S. E. (2003). Outcome of a treatment program for adult sex offenders: From prison to community. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *18*, 3-17.
- McGrath, R. J. & Hoke, S. E. (2001). *Vermont Assessment of Sex Offender Risk*. Waterbury, VT: Author. (Original work published 1994)
- McGrath, R. J., Hoke, S. E., Livingston, J. A., & Cumming, G. F., (2001, November). *The Vermont Assessment of Sex Offender Risk (VASOR): An initial reliability and validity study*. Paper presented at the 20th Annual Research and Treatment Conference of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers, San Antonio, TX.
- McGrath, R. J., & Lasher, M. P. (2011). Unpublished raw data.
- McGrath, R. J., Lasher, M. P., & Cumming, G. F. (2011). *A model of static and dynamic sex offender risk assessment* (Document No. 236217). Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice.

McGrath, R. J., Lasher, M. P., & Cumming, G. F. (2012). The Sex Offender Treatment Intervention and Progress Scale (SOTIPS): Psychometric properties and incremental validity with the Static-99R. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 24, 431-458.

McGrath, R. J., Lasher, M. P., Cumming, G. F., Langton, C. M., & Hoke, S. E. (2013). Development of Vermont Assessment of Sex Offender Risk-2 (VASOR-2) Reoffense Risk Scale. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/1079063213486936

Rice, M. E., & Harris, G. T. (2005) Comparing effect sizes in follow-up studies: ROC Area, Cohen's *d*, and *r*. *Law and Human Behavior*, 29, 615-620.

Appendix A

Scale Development and Psychometric Properties

VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale development is summarized here briefly, and a technical description can be found elsewhere (McGrath, Lasher, Cumming, Langton, & Hoke, 2013). Scale development was based on analyses of raw data sets from the four known VASOR studies for which sufficient recidivism information was available to conduct logistic regression analyses for five-year follow-up periods. All totaled, the data set included information on 1,581 adult male sex offenders.

Items on the original VASOR Reoffense Risk Scale that did not predict sexual recidivism were deleted from the new version of the scale. Additionally, slight modifications were made to some items to make them simpler to score. As well, we replaced three VASOR items with similar Static-99 items that performed better than the original VASOR items. Multiple model evaluation was conducted to choose the item weighting scheme with the best balance between simplicity of use, best goodness-of-fit, and maximized predictive accuracy. The Violence Scale was transformed into the Severity Factors Checklist, which is a checklist rather than a numerical scale.

Description of Samples

The four known VASOR studies for which sufficient recidivism information was available to develop the VASOR-2 were analyzed. Sample sizes used in final analyses were sometimes smaller than those in the original studies due to deleting cases that had less than 5-year follow-up, had an unacceptable number of missing items, or were duplicate cases in Vermont datasets. All sex offenders in these samples were male and age 18 or older at the time of placement in the community. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the four samples and each is further described here briefly.

Vermont 2001 (McGrath, Hoke, Livingston, & Cumming, 2001). This study followed 172 sex offenders who served at least a portion of a four or more year Vermont prison sentence between 1989 and 1993 and, therefore, were eligible to enter the Vermont Department of Corrections prison sex offender treatment program. They were released to the community between 1989 and 1996. Of these men, 29% completed the treatment program, 24% entered but did not complete the program, and 47% refused treatment. This sample is further described in McGrath, Cumming, Livingston, and Hoke (2003).

Canada 2002 (Langton, Barbaree, Harkins, Seto, & Peacock, 2002). This study followed 468 sex offenders assessed at the Warkworth Sexual Behaviour Clinic (WSBC) between 1989 and 2000 while serving a custodial sentence. The clinic was located in a medium security federal penitentiary in Ontario, Canada. All 468 offenders were eligible to enter the WSBC sex offender treatment program. They were released to the community between 1990 and 2001. Of these men, 85% completed the treatment program, 8% entered but did not complete the program, and 7% refused treatment. This sample is further described in Langton (2003).

Vermont 2007 (McGrath, Cumming, Hoke, & Bonn-Miller, 2007). This study followed 208 sex offenders who received community cognitive-behavioral treatment and correctional supervision in Vermont. One-half of the sample received periodic polygraph compliance exams and the other half did not. The two groups were exact pair-wise matched on Static-99 risk score, status as a completer of prison sex offender treatment, and year placed in the community. Men in this study were placed in the community between 1995 and 2001. Some men in this study ($n = 19$) were also in the Vermont 2011 study. For data analyses, these duplicate cases were deleted from this sample and retained in the Vermont 2011 sample.

Vermont 2011 (McGrath & Lasher, 2011). This sample was composed of 887 (97.6%) of the exhaustive cohort of 909 convicted adult male sex offenders placed in the community in Vermont between 2001 and 2005. Data was not available for the remaining 22 (2.4%) offenders in this cohort. The average age of the 887 men was 34 years. Almost all (96%) of these men were white, about three fifths (61%) were employed, and about three quarters (71%) had at least a 12th grade education. Of the 887 individuals, 74% were on probation, 20% were on furlough, 2% were on parole, and 4% were released without follow-up correctional supervision after serving their maximum prison sentence. Of these individuals, 46.7% had served a prison sentence for their index sex offense and 53.3% had not; 18% received sex offender treatment in prison and 80% received at least some treatment in the community. Recidivism was defined as a new charge for a sex offense.

Table 1. Characteristics of Studies

	Vermont 2001	Canada 2002	Vermont 2007	Vermont 2011	Total
<i>n</i>	172	333	189	887	1,581
Age (<i>SD</i>)	38.0 (10.7)	39.0 (10.3)	35.3 (12.7)	34.2 (13.5)	35.7 (12.6)
Offender type (%)					
Rapists	30.2	40.5	13.2	20.6	25.0
Child molesters	41.8	49.8	63.0	58.3	55.3
5 year recidivism rates					
Sexual	19.8	12.3	6.3	5.5	8.6
Violent	35.4	27.9	12.7	13.9	13.9
Any	48.8	45.6	37.0	34.4	34.4
Recidivism criteria	charge	conviction	charge	charge	
Risk scores <i>M (SD)</i>					
VASOR Reoffense Risk Scale	43.9 (20.0)	48.5 (20.8)	29.2 (18.5)	25.3 (15.3)	32.7 (20.1)
VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale	7.1 (3.7)	8.2 (3.5)	6.2 (3.7)	5.0 (3.1)	6.0 (3.6)
Static-99R	2.8 (2.5)	3.3 (2.5)	2.4 (2.0)	2.5 (2.1)	2.7 (2.2)
Static-2002R				3.5 (2.0)	

Note. Vermont 2001 = McGrath, Hoke, Livingston, & Cumming (2001); Canada 2002 = Langton, Barbaree, Harkins, Seto, & Peacock (2002); Vermont 2007 = McGrath, Cumming, Hoke, & Bonn-Miller (2007); Vermont 2011 = McGrath & Lasher (2011).

Reoffense Risk Scale Norms

Of the four datasets used to develop the Reoffense Risk Scale, we used the Vermont 2011 dataset to develop contemporary Vermont sexual recidivism norms. We believed these norms would be applicable in a wide range of other jurisdictions. The Vermont 2011 dataset is composed of an unselected (i.e., consecutive cases) routine correctional sample of adult male sex offenders, which could be viewed as roughly representative of all adjudicated sex offenders (Phenix, Helmus, & Hanson, 2012). This is opposed to samples that are preselected, for example, on treatment need, psychiatric disorder, or risk level.

Reoffense Risk Scale Psychometric Properties

Reliability

The instrument showed good interrater reliability based on two independent ratings of 30 consecutive cases evaluated in Vermont’s prison sex offender treatment program by pairs of six master’s level mental health professionals. The total Reoffense Risk Scale score single measure interclass correlation coefficient was .88.

Validity

The area under the curve (AUC) statistic was used to examine the predictive accuracy of the Reoffense Risk Scale for each study and the total sample as well as for three offender types. The AUC statistic is a recommended index of predictive accuracy for relatively low base-rate phenomena such as sexual reoffending (Rice & Harris, 2005). It represents the probability that a randomly selected recidivist will have a higher score on a risk measure than will a randomly selected non-recidivist. AUC values range from 0 to 1, with .5 representing chance-level prediction and 1 representing perfect prediction. Rice and Harris report minimum AUC values for small, medium, and large effects, which respectively are .56, .64, and .71.

As shown in Table 2, the scale predicted sexual recidivism for the total sample and across three offender types.

Table 2. VASOR-2 Predictive Accuracy (AUCs) for Sexual Recidivism by Samples and Offender Type

Sample	Type of offender			Total (<i>N</i> = 1,581)
	Child Molester (<i>n</i> = 1,067)	Rapist (<i>n</i> = 395)	Non-contact (<i>n</i> = 87)	
VT 2001 (<i>n</i> = 172)	.74**	.81***	.33	.77***
CA 2002 (<i>n</i> = 333)	.80***	.61	-	.70***
VT 2007 (<i>n</i> = 189)	.81**	.88	.44	.73**
VT 2011 (<i>n</i> = 887)	.71***	.90***	.84*	.76***
Meta-Analytic Total (<i>N</i> = 1,581, <i>k</i> = 4)	.74***	.77***	.69*	.74***

p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001

Severity Factors Checklist

In exploratory analyses using an experimental version of the Severity Factors Checklist, we found a positive moderate correlation between sexual recidivists’ index sex offense checklist scores and their checklist scores for new sex offenses. We are continuing to examine this relationship in ongoing research. Currently, the Severity Factors Checklist is simply a method of describing the severity of sex offenses with respect to sexual intrusiveness, force used, physical victim harm, and victim vulnerability characteristics. The severity of an individual’s offenses, in most jurisdictions, influences correctional placement and management decisions.

Appendix B

VASOR-2 Vermont Sexual Recidivism Norms

VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale estimated sexual recidivism rates detailed here were based on analyses of 887 (97.6%) of the exhaustive cohort of 909 convicted adult male sex offenders placed in the community in Vermont between 2001 and 2005. Consequently, it is an unselected (i.e., consecutive cases) routine correctional sample of sex offenders, which can be viewed as roughly representative of all adjudicated sex offenders. This is opposed to samples that are preselected, for example, on treatment need, psychiatric disorder, or risk level. Appendix A contains a more detailed description of the sample. Estimated sexual recidivism rates for VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale categorized scores are shown in Table 3 and for individual scores are shown in Table 4. Recidivism was defined as a new charge for a sexual offense.

Table 3. VASOR-2 Estimated 5-Year Sexual Recidivism Rates by Categorized Scores ($N = 887$)

Score	Risk category	Percent of sample	Cumulative percent	Logistic regression estimates	
				Recidivism rate	95% CI
0 – 5	Low	41.0	41.0	1.7	1.0 – 2.8
6 – 8	Moderate-Low	35.4	76.4	4.2	2.9 – 6.0
9 – 11	Moderate-High	15.9	92.3	10.2	6.1 – 16.4
12 – 22	High	7.7	100.0	22.6	15.0 – 32.7
Total		100.0	100.0	5.5	2.1 – 11.3

Note. AUC = 0.75, $p < .001$; CI = 0.68 – 0.82

Table 4. VASOR-2 Estimated 5-Year Sexual Recidivism Rates by Individual Scores ($N = 887$)

Score	% of Sample	Cumulative %	Logistic regression estimates	
			% recidivism rate	95% CI
0	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.5 – 0.9
1	1.9	2.7	0.9	0.6 – 1.3
2	3.4	6.1	1.2	0.4 – 3.3
3	8.9	15.0	1.5	0.9 – 2.6
4	12.1	27.1	2.0	1.0 – 4.2
5	14.0	41.0	2.6	1.3 – 5.1
6	13.5	54.6	3.4	2.2 – 5.1
7	11.3	65.8	4.4	3.4 – 5.5
8	10.6	76.4	5.6	4.6 – 6.8
9	7.7	84.1	7.2	6.3 – 8.2
10	4.7	88.8	9.2	5.9 – 14.1
11	3.5	92.3	11.7	6.1 – 21.2
12	1.7	94.0	14.7	9.7 – 21.6
13	1.9	95.9	18.3	11.8 – 27.3
14	1.4	97.3	22.7	16.0 – 31.1
15	1.4	98.6	27.7	22.5 – 33.5
16	0.7	99.3	33.3	18.2 – 52.9
17	0.3	99.7	39.4	26.2 – 54.4
18	0.3	100.0	45.9	33.4 – 59.0
19	-	100.0	52.6	31.7 – 72.6
20	-	100.0	59.1	37.7 – 77.6
21	-	100.0	65.4	44.1 – 81.9
22	-	100.0	71.1	50.7 – 85.5
$M = 5.0$ $SD = 3.1$	100.0	100.0	5.5	3.0 – 9.9

Note. AUC = 0.76, $p < .001$; CI = 0.68 – 0.83

VASOR-2 Vermont Violent Recidivism Norms

VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale estimated violent recidivism rates detailed here were based on analyses of 887 (97.6%) of the exhaustive cohort of 909 convicted adult male sex offenders placed in the community in Vermont between 2001 and 2005. Consequently, it is an unselected (i.e., consecutive cases) routine correctional sample of sex offenders, which can be viewed as roughly representative of all adjudicated sex offenders. This is opposed to samples that are preselected, for example, on treatment need, psychiatric disorder, or risk level. Appendix A contains a more detailed description of the sample. Estimated violent recidivism rates for VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale categorized scores are shown in Table 5 and for individual scores are shown in Table 6. Recidivism was defined as a new charge for a violent (including sexual) offense.

Table 5. VASOR-2 Estimated 5-Year Violent Recidivism Rates by Categorized Scores ($N = 887$)

Score	Risk category	Percent of sample	Cumulative percent	Logistic regression estimates	
				Recidivism rate	95% CI
0 – 5	Low	41.0	41.0	7.4	4.3 – 12.3
6 – 8	Moderate-Low	35.4	76.4	13.2	8.1 – 20.7
9 – 11	Moderate-High	15.9	92.3	22.4	14.9 – 32.3
12 – 22	High	7.7	100.0	35.5	23.2 – 50.1
Total		100.0	100.0	14.0	4.2 – 37.4

Note. AUC = 0.68, $p < .001$; CI = 0.63 – 0.73

Table 6. VASOR-2 Estimated 5-Year Violent Recidivism Rates by Individual Scores ($N = 887$)

Score	% of Sample	Cumulative %	Logistic regression estimates	
			% recidivism rate	95% CI
0	0.8	0.8	4.2	3.2 – 5.5
1	1.9	2.7	5.0	3.5 – 7.1
2	3.4	6.1	5.9	4.2 – 8.3
3	8.9	15.0	7.0	5.2 – 9.3
4	12.1	27.1	8.3	5.8 – 11.7
5	14.0	41.0	9.7	6.3 – 14.7
6	13.5	54.6	11.4	7.2 – 17.7
7	11.3	65.8	13.4	10.0 – 17.7
8	10.6	76.4	15.6	12.5 – 19.4
9	7.7	84.1	18.2	12.9 – 25.0
10	4.7	88.8	21.0	14.9 – 28.7
11	3.5	92.3	24.1	19.0 – 30.1
12	1.7	94.0	27.6	21.9 – 34.4
13	1.9	95.9	31.3	24.9 – 38.5
14	1.4	97.3	35.3	28.2 – 43.1
15	1.4	98.6	39.5	30.8 – 49.0
16	0.7	99.3	43.9	33.5 – 54.8
17	0.3	99.7	48.4	40.9 – 55.9
18	0.3	100.0	52.8	46.3 – 59.3
19	-	100.0	57.3	43.0 – 70.4
20	-	100.0	61.6	47.5 – 74.0
21	-	100.0	65.8	52.0 – 77.4
22	-	100.0	69.7	56.0 – 77.4
$M = 5.0$ $SD = 3.1$	100.0	100.0	14.0	8.4 – 22.4

Note. AUC = 0.68, $p < .001$; CI = 0.63 – 0.73

Appendix C

Combined VASOR-2 and SOTIPS Vermont Sexual and Violent Recidivism Norms

The VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale, which is a static risk instrument, can be used as a stand-alone risk instrument or in conjunction with the Sex Offender Treatment and Intervention Scale (SOTIPS), which is a dynamic risk instrument. The SOTIPS scoring manual and a description of its psychometric properties can be found elsewhere (McGrath, Cumming, & Lasher, 2013; McGrath, Lasher, & Cumming, 2011, 2012).

Combined VASOR-2 Reoffense Risk Scale and SOTIPS risk/need categories are shown in Table 7, and Table 8 shows the estimated 3-year sexual and violent recidivism rates for these risk/need categories. These risk/need categories and estimated recidivism rates were based on analyses of 759 convicted adult male sex offenders who were under correctional supervision and enrolled in cognitive-behavioral community treatment in Vermont between 2001 and 2007. Recidivism was defined as a new charge for a sexual or violent (including sexual) offense.

Table 7. Combined VASOR-2 and SOTIPS Risk/Need Categories

VASOR-2 Risk Category by Score	VASOR-2 Score	SOTIPS Need Category by Score		
		Low (0 to 10)	Moderate (11 to 20)	High (21 to 48)
Low	0 to 5	Low	Low	Moderate-low
Moderate-low	6 to 8	Low	Moderate-low	Moderate-high
Moderate-high	9 to 11	Moderate-low	Moderate-high	High
High	12 to 22	Moderate-high	High	High

Table 8. Estimated 3-Year Sexual and Violent Recidivism Rates for Combined VASOR-2 and SOTIPS Risk/Need Categories

Risk/Need Category	Sexual Recidivism (<i>n</i> = 749; AUC = .77***)			Violent Recidivism (<i>n</i> = 746; AUC = .69***)		
	Percent of sample	Percent recidivism	95% CI	Percent of sample	Recidivism rate	95% C.I.
Low	52.0	1.4	0.6 - 3.3	52.3	4.4	2.6 - 7.6
Moderate-low	22.7	3.3	1.4 - 7.8	22.7	8.0	4.3 - 14.5
Moderate-high	15.9	7.6	3.9 - 14.3	15.6	14.0	6.4 - 20.3
High	9.5	16.5	8.8 - 28.7	9.4	23.3	15.1 - 34.2
Totals	100.0	4.3	1.4 - 12.5	100.0	8.5	3.7 - 18.2

*** *p* < .001

Vermont Assessment of Sex Offender Risk-2

Name	DOB	Age	Rater	Date
------	-----	-----	-------	------

Reoffense Risk Scale

1. **Age at Community Placement**
18 to 34 = 3 35 to 54 = 2 55 or older = 0
2. **Prior Sex Offense Convictions**
none = 0 one = 2 two or more = 3
3. **Prior Sentencing Dates**
three or less = 0 four or more = 1
4. **Any Violations of Probation, Parole or Other Release Conditions During Past Five Years**
no = 0 yes = 1
5. **Any Convictions for Non-Contact Sex Offenses**
no = 0 yes = 1
6. **Any Male Victims**
no = 0 yes = 1
7. **Relationship to Victims**
lived with for 30 days or more just prior to offense = 0
nonresidential relative or acquaintance = 1 stranger = 3
8. **Offense-Related Sexual Fixation**
single victim and history of consenting, age appropriate sexual relationships = 0 two to four victims and history of consenting, age appropriate sexual relationships = 2
five or more victims and/or little or no history of consenting, age appropriate sexual relationships = 3
9. **Substance Abuse During Past Five Years in Community**
no problems = 0 some legal or social problems = 1
serious life disruptions = 2
10. **Address Changes During Past Year**
one or less = 0 two or more = 2
11. **Time Employed or in School During Past Year in Community**
60% or more = 0 59% or less = 1
12. **Sex Offender Treatment History**
(a) has reoffended during or after sex offender treatment, or
(b) was incarcerated immediately after conviction for index sex offense, entered treatment, and treatment status at release was "terminated" or "dropped out"
no = 0 yes = 1

Total

Severity Factors Checklist

1. **Most Sexually Intrusive Index Sex Offense**
 - a. non-contact offense
 - b. fondling
 - c. digital penetration, fellatio, or cunnilingus
 - d. actual or attempted penile penetration of vagina or anus
 - e. bizarre or ritualistic behavior
2. **Most Force Used During Index Sex Offenses**
 - a. non-contact offense
 - b. contact offense
 - c. force greater than necessary to gain compliance or clear threats of physical harm to victim or others
 - d. use of potentially deadly weapon
3. **Most Physical Harm to Index Sex Offense Victims**
 - a. no medical treatment required
 - b. injury not requiring formal medical attention
 - c. treated for injury and released
 - d. hospitalized
 - e. death resulting
4. **Vulnerability Characteristics of the Index Offense Victims**
 - a. victim age 11 or younger
 - b. victim age 65 or older
 - c. victim developmentally disabled
 - d. victim had a major mental illness
 - e. victim had a serious physical disability
 - f. victim had severe drug and alcohol intoxication
 - g. none of the above

Reoffense Risk Scale

Total Score and Risk Category

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	-	22
Low					Moderate Low			Moderate High			High			