

ANALYSIS OF COMPREHENSIVE RISK ASSESSMENTS ADMINISTERED IN 2015

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Risk Categories

Rating	Definition	Implications for Violence Recidivism
Low Risk	Non-elevated risk relative to long-term inmates and to other parolees.	Low-risk examinees are expected to commit violence much less frequently than all other parolees.
Moderate Risk	Elevated risk relative to long-term inmates and non-elevated risk relative to other parolees.	Moderate-risk examinees are expected to commit violence more frequently than Low-risk long-term parolees but less frequently than other parolees.
High Risk	Markedly elevated risk relative to long-term inmates and average risk relative to other parolees.	High-risk examinees are expected to commit violence more frequently than Low- and Moderate-risk long-term parolees and similarly to other parolees.

FAD's approach to risk communication is grounded in two assumptions: First, long-term inmates, based upon their demographics and assessed risk characteristics, represent a lower risk cohort relative to much younger and shorter-term state prison parolees. And, secondly, not all long-term inmates are alike. There is significant variation within the cohort of long-term inmates eligible for parole consideration.

Long term inmates assessed to be low risk, in terms of estimated recidivism, likely resemble inmates granted parole and released by the Board. Long term inmates assessed to be high risk likely resemble determinately sentenced inmates released at the end of their terms. And long term inmates assessed to be moderate risk likely fall somewhere in between.

Low, Moderate, and High Risk

- Of the more than 2,000 CRAs administered in 2015, psychologists opined **(33.6%)** of examinees were Low Risk, **(48.6%)** were Moderate Risk and **(17.6%)** were High Risk.
- Most examinees (82%) were assessed by psychologists to represent non-elevated risk relative to other parolees.

These findings are consistent with what we know about the impacts of long term incarceration on recidivism and with the empirical finding that Lifers as a group, on average, obtain scores and ratings on risk assessment instruments that are roughly one standard deviation below the mean or average of United States' prisoners (Guy, Packer, Kusaj, and Douglas, 2014), meaning they present with fewer risks. These findings are also consistent with what I communicated to board in open session in December, 2009.

Comparing Three and Five Risk Categories

	Low	Low / Mod	Moderate	Mod / High	High
2009-11	26%	19%	33%	11%	11%
2014	35%	-----	45.5%	-----	19.5%
2015	33.6%	-----	48.6%	-----	17.6%

Indicators of Discriminant and Concurrent Validity

- As institutional behavioral stability improves (as reflected in lower institutional classification scores) assessed risk declines.
 - The average institutional classification score of Low Risk examinees was 22.5. For Moderate Risk it was 40.3. For High Risk it was 106.3.
- As offenders age assessed risk declines.
 - The average offender age of Low Risk examinees was 53.1. For Moderate Risk it was 51.5. For High Risk it was 49.3.

- If FAD's second assumption is correct, that not all inmates coming before the board are alike, and if its assessment methodology reliably captures variations in risk across inmates, then low, moderate, and high risk inmates should differ from each other in meaningful ways and these differences should be consistent with other indices of risk like institutional classification score. This is referred to as discriminant and concurrent validity.

Differences in Risk Factor Presence

- Low Risk examinees (on average) were found to have 9.6 of 20 HCR-20-V3 risk factors present to some degree. Moderate Risk examinees were found to have 13.8 risk factors present and High Risk examinees were found to have 16.5 risk factors present.
- Low, Moderate, and High Risk examinees differed across individual HCR-20-V3 items.
- Recent Problems with Instability (C4) was an identified risk to some degree for 7% of Low Risk, 36% of Moderate Risk, and 76% of High Risk examinees.
- Recent Problems with Accessing, Attending, Being Compliant With, Participating Genuinely or Benefiting from Mental Health or Correctional Interventions (C5) was an identified risk to some degree for 19% of Low Risk, 63% of Moderate Risk, and 92% of High Risk examinees.

Other Examples:

History of Employment Problems (H4) was an identified risk to some degree for 60% of Low Risk, 76% of Moderate Risk, and 91% of High Risk examinees.

History of Problems with Major Mental Disorder (H6) was an identified risk to some degree for 22% of Low Risk, 33% of Moderate Risk, and 53% of High Risk examinees.

Note: 33% of low, moderate, and high risk inmates were assessed to have a history of problems with major mental disorder. 19% were assessed to have recent problems with symptoms of major mental disorder. 8% were assessed to have highly relevant symptoms of major mental disorder.

Future Problems with Living Situation (R2) was an identified risk to some degree for 27% of Low Risk Examinees, 60% of Moderate Risk Examinees, and 82% of High Risk Examinees.

Future Problems with Personal Support (R3) was an identified risk to some degree for 31% of Low Risk Examinees, 58% of Moderate Risk Examinees, and 85% of High Risk Examinees.

Differences in Risk Factor Relevance

- When risk factors were identified to be present to some degree, they were assessed to have greater current relevance for Moderate and (especially) High Risk examinees.
- Most examinees (79%) were assessed to have Recent Problems with Insight (C1) to some degree. For Low Risk examinees it was present in 53% but highly relevant in just 12% of cases. For Moderate Risk examinees it was present in 90% and highly relevant in 43% of cases. For High Risk Examinees, it was present in 99% and highly relevant in 85% of cases.
- Most examinees (86%) were assessed to have Future Problems with Stress and Coping (R5) to some degree. For Low Risk Examinees, this risk factor was assessed to be highly relevant in 16% of cases. For Moderate Risk Examinees, it was highly relevant in 43% of cases. For High Risk Examinees, it was highly relevant in 80% of cases.

Other Examples:

As expected, all (>99%) were assessed to have History of Problems with Violence (H1). For Low Risk this risk factor was assessed to be highly relevant in 49% of cases, for Moderate Risk it was highly relevant in 61% of cases, and for High Risk examinees it was highly relevant in 88% of cases.

Most examinees (84%) were assessed to have History of Problems with Substance Use (H5) to some degree. For Low Risk this risk factor was assessed to be highly relevant in 43% of cases, for Moderate Risk it was highly relevant in 54% of cases, and for High Risk examinees it was highly relevant in 66% of cases.

Differences in Assessed Personality Traits

- The average Psychopathy Checklist (PCL-R) total score for Low Risk examinees was 13.6. For Moderate Risk examinees it was 18.8 and for High Risk examinees it was 23.8 (on a scale of 0 to 40). Low and Moderate Risk examinees obtained PCL-R scores that are well below the mean (arithmetic average) of North American Male Offenders. High risk examinees obtained scores that are very close to the mean.
- 3.5% of examinees obtained scores of 30 or greater (more than one standard deviation above the mean and above the cutoff often used to diagnose psychopathic or dissocial personality disorder).

Static-99R

- Administered in 15% of risk assessments.
 - 26.5% categorized low risk for sexual violence.
 - 40.1% categorized low/moderate risk for sexual violence.
 - 26.8% categorized moderate/high risk for sexual violence.
 - 6.6% categorized high risk.

Relationships Between Psychologist Overall Risk Ratings and Institutional Classification Score

- When psychologists assess inmates with lower classification scores, they tend (on average) to identify fewer risks, to find identified risks have less current relevance or have been mitigated by other considerations, and to opine that lower risk for violence is present.
- When psychologists assess inmates with higher classification scores, their assessments change in the direction one might expect (i.e., more risks, greater current relevance and less mitigation, and higher risk for violence).