

lower STATIC-99 Scores

---

**From:** Hanson, Karl [mailto:Karl.Hanson@ps-sp.gc.ca]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 08, 2007 8:06 AM  
**To:** thorndm@dhfs.state.wi.us; Phenix, Amy email; HarrisAJ@csc-scc.gc.ca; Doren, Dennis; Dana Anderson  
**Cc:** Leslie Helmus  
**Subject:** static 99 recidivism rates in replication studies

Friends/Colleagues,

This is a heads-up about some new research findings that we will have to deal with. In Leslie's Static-2002 validation study, she had the incidental finding that the sexual recidivism rates for Static-99 risk categories were lower than expected for the high risk cases. This applied only to the sexual recidivism rates – the violent recidivism rates (including the sexual rates) were similar to those found in Hanson & Thornton's (2000) development sample. As well, there was significant variability in the recidivism rates across samples, which could not obviously be explained by pre-existing risk levels, treatment effects, or jurisdictions (i.e., there was significant variability within the same jurisdiction - CSC). We have yet to figure out what is going on. If all the rates were lower, then it would be reasonable to conclude that something has changed for the good. Given that the combined violent and sexual recidivism rates have not substantially changed, it seems odd to think that the sexual rates have gone down while the violent rates have gone up. It could be that plea bargains have increased the percentage of sexual offences hidden as non-sexual violent offences. It could be that there are real declines in sexual recidivism, and increased detection of non-sexual violent offences.

Obviously, this is something that we will have to look at more carefully, but we are unlikely to come to any strong conclusions for a while.

I am sending out the attached note to you now because it has entered general circulation via Leslie's ATSA presentation. Expect to hear about it in court.

R. Karl Hanson, Ph.D.  
Corrections Research  
Public Safety Canada  
340 Laurier Ave., West  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P8  
Canada

phone 613 991 2840; fax 613 990 8295  
email [karl.hanson@ps.gc.ca](mailto:karl.hanson@ps.gc.ca)

Observed recidivism rates for Static-99 risk categories in 8 replication samples.

This attached table is derived by combining the findings of eight samples of sexual offenders (described in more detail in Helmus, 2007). The norms for sexual recidivism in these data are lower than the norms in the Static-99 development sample (Harris et al., 2003), particularly for offenders with higher Static-99 scores. Interestingly, the violent recidivism rates in this table are very similar to the Static-99 development sample. It is unclear whether the apparent decrease in sexual recidivism norms is genuine, and if so, why this is occurring. This table has approximately three times the sample size of the development sample and includes more recent samples (the majority were released in the 1990s and later) whereas offenders in the Static-99 development samples were released primarily in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Reader should note that there were significant differences in recidivism rates across the eight samples that could not be easily explained by factors such as treatment effects, recidivism criteria, or jurisdictional differences. In contrast, the three samples that comprise the original Static-99 norms did not have significant variability in recidivism rates. At this time it is unclear which norms (either from this table or the Static-99 coding manual) should be used when reporting Static-99 risk scores. We are currently conducting further research to examine this issue and we welcome you to contact us to keep abreast of our progress in this area.

Leslie Helmus  
Leslie.helmus@ps.gc.ca

Harris, A., Phenix, A., Hanson, R. K., & Thornton, D. (2003). *Static-99 coding rules: Revised 2003*. Ottawa, ON: Solicitor General Canada.

Helmus, L. (2007). *A multi-site comparison of the validity and utility of the Static-99 and Static-2002 for risk assessment with sexual offenders*. Unpublished B.A. thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Static-99 Recidivism Percentages by Risk Level

Static-99 Score	Sample Size <i>n</i> (%)	Sexual Recidivism		Violent Recidivism		Any Recidivism	
		5 years	10 years	5 years	10 years	5 years	10 years
0	361 (10.2)	2.1	3.4	6.5	11.5	11.8	15.4
1	451 (12.8)	4.3	6.0	7.5	13.9	19.8	27.4
2	571 (16.2)	5.5	8.2	12.9	22.3	23.5	31.1
3	572 (16.2)	9.2	13.7	17.7	32.7	36.9	50.8
4	515 (13.5)	10.0	17.1	24.6	38.3	43.4	58.6
5	389 (14.6)	17.4	24.9	30.9	41.5	50.9	64.8
6+	661 (18.8)	23.8	31.1	37.0	49.8	61.0	71.9
32							
Average							
3.4	3,520 (100)	11.1	16.1	21.6	33.0	36.7	47.6

Data from the samples used in Helmus (2007)  
 Leslie.helmus@ps.gc.ca