VALIDATION OF THE OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS USED FOR CLASSIFICATION OF OFFENDERS ON SUPERVISION

A Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 1989 the Community Services Branch (CSB) of the Oregon Department of Corrections implemented an objective risk assessment system (RAS) designed to govern classification decisions about probationers and parolees on a statewide basis. The RAS is an adaptation of the History of Risk Scale which was originally implemented by the Oregon State Board of Parole in 1977 and used to guide their release decision making. The overall goals of the system are to: 1) classify offenders based on their risk of recidivism; 2) manage the supervision of offenders using the least restrictive method; and 3) insure statewide consistency in the classification and management of offenders.

The RAS follows the form and function of most risk oriented classification systems which have become standard operational procedure in hundreds of community corrections agencies across the country over the last decade. The RAS actually employs two separate risk scales which are used to establish a classification level at admission and to reassess this decision at scheduled intervals throughout the period of supervision. The initial risk assessment and reassessment scales are actuarial type instruments which direct that the classification level for an offender be established from a composite score derived from their subscores on a series of specific social and criminal history factors or criteria. The RAS does allow the CSB officer the discretion to override the

classification level derived from the assessment score when additional risk factors can justify this departure.

In May 1992, the CSB awarded a contract to the National Council On Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), a private non-profit research and consulting organization specializing in the field of criminal justice, to evaluate the performance of the system in meeting its established goals (i.e. validation). Validating the RAS is extremely important as this system has direct implications for public safety, by determining the level of supervision to be provided in individual cases, and for agency management since classification decisions about offender supervision become the driving force behind CSB staff allocations and budgeting decisions. This report presents the methods used to conduct the validation as well as the findings and recommendations produced by this research study.

The overall goal of the validation process was to assess the current performance of the RAS and recommend specific steps that can be taken to improve its performance. In conducting the validation NCCD was assisted by an Advisory Committee composed of a cross-section of CSB managers and line staff. The Committee established a series of specific research questions to be addressed by the research. The answers to these questions formed the basis for NCCD's assessment of how well the RAS exhibits properties associated with effective classifications systems. These properties are: 1) validity -- does the system achieve the goals for which it was designed; 2) reliability -- is it accurately and consistently

applied; 3) equity -- is it fair and effective in its application to specific groups of offenders (e.g. sex and racial groups); and 4) utility -- is the system relatively easy to use and understand for the staff responsible for its application.

In order to conduct this type of comprehensive assessment NCCD analyzed several types of quantitative and qualitative data collected from several sources. These data included:

1. All RAS (initial assessment and reassessment) information as well as demographic and background characteristics available from the ORDOC's computerized Offender Profile System (OPS) on a sample of offenders admitted to supervision in the first six months following statewide implementation of the classification system. Using this information for this group of offenders allowed NCCD to assess the application of the RAS in individual cases over their entire period of supervision.
2. Complete criminal histories for all offenders included in the admissions sample which were obtained from the Law Enforcement Data Sheets (LEDS) maintained by the Oregon State Police which is the official state repository for this information. This information allowed NCCD to compare an offender's performance over an eighteen month follow-up period in relation to the risk assessments made about them. This information also allowed NCCD to examine alternative criminal history and background criteria that might improve the performance of the current RAS.

There is clear evidence from the analysis of its actual performance that the current system effectively discriminates between groups of offenders with decidedly different rates of success/failure. It is also clear that the current RAS is effective in managing CSB resources by placing a large proportion of appropriate offenders in lower supervision levels. The study also found the system performed as well with specific sex, race and offense groups as it did with the overall population.

Other positive findings regarding the performance of the current system included the observation that CSB officers used their discretion to override the RAS assigned classification levels in a limited number of cases and were evenhanded in these departures by increasing and decreasing assessments in about equal proportions.

Finally, this study showed that the current RAS moves a significant number of offenders to lower classification levels through the reassessment process. This is an important feature of the system since this allows the CSB to control its workload by reducing its resource allocation to offenders who are performing well under supervision.

On the other hand, the validation study also revealed some deficiencies with the current system. First, the results of the interrater reliability testing found substantial levels of scoring errors which were attributed to the complexity of the RAS scoring instructions. The impact of this problem was mitigated by the high

3. Official ORDOC documents such as policies, regulations and procedures which NCCD used to identify the specific goals and objectives of the RAS.

4. Validation research studies which contained assessment criteria empirically found to be effective in assessing risk of recidivism in other jurisdictions. These studies were used to assess the apparent (i.e. face) validity of the RAS criteria and to identify potential alternative factors.

5. Interrater reliability test results from the scoring of a sample of actual cases by a group of randomly selected officers from across the state. This information was used to assess the level of accuracy and consistency in line staff applications of the RAS.

6. The results of a survey of CSB staff attitudes and experiences with the current RAS which provided a qualitative assessment of the system's design, implementation and effectiveness.

Overall, the results of NCCD's assessment of the current RAS are very favorable. The highlights of NCCD's findings are as follows:

There is considerable support for the face validity of the current RAS in that its design appears consistent with its stated goals and the criteria it employs are found in most risk assessment systems that have been empirically validated in other jurisdictions across the country.

rates of correct classification assignments which occurred in spite of these errors.

Second, the current system has some structural flows that reduce its utility. For example, the scoring process is counterintuitive assigning higher scores to lower level risk cases and vice versa, making it somewhat difficult to understand. In addition, the narrow scoring range makes it difficult to adjust cut-off scores which is an important feature in dealing with changing workload and resource conditions.

Finally, the current RAS lacks credibility with CSB staff based on the results of the staff survey which showed only mixed opinions on the design and implementation of the system and clearly negative opinions regarding its overall effectiveness. These negative staff perceptions can be attributed to the reliability and utility problems mentioned above as well as the lack of any empirical evidence regarding the actual performance of the current RAS.

Even more importantly the validation study identified specific steps that could be taken to improve the performance of the RAS and assuage the problems with the current system. NCCD's analysis produced revised initial assessment and reassessment scales which improve the separation of offenders based on success/failure rates while simultaneously placing larger proportions of offenders in lower supervision levels. In addition, the revised system is easier to score, easier to understand and easier to adjust for workload purposes. In other words, adopting the revised RAS proposed by NCCD

could be extremely beneficial to the CSB by increasing public safety, reducing workload and drawing support for its implementation among its staff.

NCCD recommended that the CSB implement the revised RAS which can be facilitated by pilot testing to refine its design and procedures and also by communicating the results of the validation study to elicit understanding and support among its staff.. NCCD also recommended specific steps to facilitate future validation research studies.

In conclusion, there are many obstacles that have thwarted the validation interests and efforts of many community corrections agencies. It is clear from the results of this study that Oregon's commitment to conducting validation research can now produce substantial benefits. With the adoption of the revised, empirically derived RAS, Oregon will join the small but elite group of community corrections agencies who have implemented a second generation of classification systems the are demonstrably more effective as an offender and agency management system.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In January 1992, the Community Services Branch (CSB) of the Oregon Department of Corrections (ORDOC) issued a request for proposals for the validation of the risk assessment system (RAS) used to classify probationers and parolees on a statewide basis. In May the Department awarded a contract to the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) to conduct the validation. NCCD is the nation's oldest private, non-profit research and consulting organization in the field of criminal justice. It has become known as the nation's leading expert on offender classification systems and has assisted dozens of state and local correctional agencies in designing, implementing and validating these systems.

In the most general of terms, validation refers to the process of insuring that the classification meets the goals for which it was designed. The process of validation first involves an objective evaluation of the performance of the system itself. Should the evaluation reveal deficiencies, the focus of the validation process then shifts to identifying and testing various modifications that could be made to improve its performance. The ultimate goal is to assist the correctional agency in insuring that its classification system is properly designed, effectively implemented and conscientiously maintained.

This is extremely important since the classification system has implications for both offender and agency management. With the offender, the classification system is used to guide decisions

regarding the level of supervision to be assigned. This decision has direct implications for the protection of the public as the supervising officer's time devoted to a case is the first line of defense against continued criminal activity. It is therefore essential that the classification system can effectively distinguish those offenders who represent a significant risk to the public and warrant the allocation of higher levels of supervision resources, from those that do not.

The classification system has a direct impact on agency management through the allocation of resources. Classification information is used to translate service (e.g. supervision) requirements into resource (e.g. staff) requirements through various workload accounting systems. In this way classification decisions about offenders become the driving force behind agency staff allocation and budgeting decisions.

This report presents the methods NCCD used to conduct the evaluation of the RAS, the findings from the evaluation as well as recommendations to improve its performance.

A. BACKGROUND: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

While risk assessment was clearly not a new idea, for all practical purposes it was "discovered" in the 1970s and operationalized in the 1980s. Before 1980, risk assessment was limited to a few research papers or used somewhat idiosyncratically by a few correctional agencies. Even the current term "risk assessment" was not part of the correctional nomenclature, and risk

scales took on a variety of titles, sometimes named for their developers (i.e., Burgess Scaling), other times using statistical or descriptive titles (the California Base Expectancy Tables; the Federal Salient Factor Scale). However, as probation and parole caseloads began to swell in the late 1970s, agencies sought methods for stretching their limited resources to continue to provide the most effective services possible. Obviously, as caseloads increased, exceeding 100 cases per officer in many agencies, corrections could no longer afford to see all offenders as often as desired; some method for establishing priorities was needed. The field turned quite naturally to risk assessment; it was an idea whose time had finally arrived.

Agencies adopting risk screening techniques had two options. Some -- to a large degree, those with in-house research capability -- developed their own instruments. Most, however, adopted instruments developed in other jurisdictions, sometimes incorporating minor modifications to reflect differences in policy or terminology. Remarkably, over the course of one short decade, the practice of probation and parole in the United States was altered significantly. Risk assessment went from a seldom-used technology in 1980 to the <u>principle</u> case management tool of probation and parole agencies by 1990.

The emergence of risk assessment as a method for sorting cases for supervision purposes was due, to a large extent, to the National Institute of Correction's (NIC) Model Probation/Parole Management Project and to other NIC technical assistance efforts.

The model project not only spread the use of risk assessment instruments, but also led to considerable standardization in how these instruments were used by probation and parole agencies throughout the nation. Comparisons of current practice indicate that reclassification schedules, contact standards, and use of needs assessments show only minor variance from jurisdiction to jurisdiction (NCCD, 1990).

In all instances of rapid change, solutions to existing problems create new problems, and the switch to risk assessment systems for setting supervision priorities in probation and parole proved no exception. As the use of risk assessment spread, the research community began to worry that instruments developed in one jurisdiction and transferred to another may not "work" for the adopting agency (Wright, Clear and Dickson, 1984). After all, populations, crime rates, and living situations vary significantly from region to region, state to state. What predicts risk in a rural Midwestern state may have little connection to risk in New York or Los Angeles. Furthermore, a follow-up study of the NIC Model Project effort indicated that, in most agencies, original expectations regarding testing and validation of adopted risk assessment scales were lost in the crush of everyday operations (NIC, 1989).

Many agencies have also observed a gradual shift toward higher risk classifications. Since this often translates into the need for additional staff, funding agencies -- state legislatures and county boards -- began to directly question if these changes were

legitimate and indirectly question the validity of risk assessment scales. Two obvious questions are raised by higher classifications: "Is the increase in average risk scores due to changes in offender characteristics?" and "Are risk scales developed ten to fifteen years ago still valid?" All of the issues raised by researchers, changes in offender profiles, and the passage of time have led to increased interest in scale validation.

In Oregon, the current RAS is an adaptation of the Oregon History of Risk Scale initially implemented by the Oregon State Board of Parole in 1977. The Community Services Branch adopted the History of Risk as its initial assessment instrument and then developed a second and separate instrument to be used at reclassification. These two separate scales constitute the RAS used to make classification decisions by the CSB since 1989.

The ORDOC implemented the current risk assessment system (RAS) to bring consistency to the way offenders were classified for supervision in the state's 32 CSB offices. Until then, some counties used subjective systems for these decisions while others had well developed and long standing objective systems (e.g Multnomah, Marion and Clackamas Counties). In implementing an objective classification system, the ORDOC joined literally hundreds of agencies that made these systems part of their standard operational procedures in the 1980's.

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT RISK ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The ORDOC classification system uses two separate risk assessment scales to classify probationers and parolees and is one component of the overall Oregon Case Management System (OCMS), the primary system used by the Department to manage offenders in the community. The risk assessment scales that were the focal point of this validation project are included as Appendix A to this report.

The ORDOC's RAS follows the form and function of most risk oriented classification systems in use in community corrections agencies around the country. The risk scales are actuarial instruments which derive a numerical composite score from the summation of separate scores on each of several factors or risk criterion. The range of potential risk scores are divided by designated cut-off scores into four categories corresponding to the four supervision levels employed by the CSB which are High, Medium, Low and Limited. The RAS directs that the supervision level of an offender to be established based on the assessment score itself, however, it also allows an officer to use their individual discretion to override the assessed level and assign the offender to a higher or lower supervision levels if additional factors justify this departure.

The risk factors or criteria used by the RAS are social and criminal history measures considered to be related to the probability of continued criminal behavior. Each criterion is categorized or scaled by the assignment of weights reflecting the strength of its relationship to the probability of reoffending.

While not totally unprecedented, the RAS is relatively unique in that higher criterion scores actually denote lower risk levels and vice versa.

Finally, the initial risk assessment instrument is applied only once at the start of a probation supervision period and consists entirely of social and criminal history background factors. The risk reassessment scale, on the other hand, is reapplied at six month intervals throughout the entire period of supervision and is used as the basis for changes to assigned supervision levels during this period. While the reassessment scale uses several of the criminal history factors from the initial assessment instrument it also includes several factors which measure behavior since the last classification assignment. In this way the focus of the risk assessment shifts from prior criminal behavior to actual performance under supervision. This is an important feature of the RAS as it allows the supervision levels of offenders to be adjusted based on their actual performance during supervision and thus can influence both the behavior of probationer and parolees (i.e. incentive or disincentive) as well as the workload of CSB officers and offices.

C. ISSUES IN RISK ASSESSMENT: THE NEED FOR VALIDATION

The 1980s saw record increases in the number of offenders under correctional supervision. While most of the public's attention has been focused on burgeoning prison populations, the fact is that the number of persons on probation and parole has

risen at an even faster pace. Between 1980 and 1988, prison population grew 90 percent; during the same period the number of offenders on probation and parole more than doubled, growing at a 110 percent rate (see Table 1).

The 1980s were also a time of substantial change in the demographic make-up of the United States as well as profound changes in sentencing policy. As the "baby boom" generation aged, the proportion of our population in the high crime-prone years (generally defined as those under 35) declined and, as Figure A illustrates, this trend will continue through the 1990s.

Although this portends some changes in offender populations, they are almost inconsequential when compared to changes brought about by revisions in sentencing practices. In the 1980s, many states, as well as the federal government, instituted harsher penalties for all types of offenses, particularly for drug-related crimes. The war on drugs has resulted in massive increases in the number of drug offenders -- comprised largely of minority youth -- entering the criminal justice system. In Florida, for example, 73 percent of all drug offenders are Black compared to 53 percent of all other prison admissions.

Table 2 presents increases in the number of admissions to prison for drug offenses in eight selected states over the last few years of the decade. Similar patterns are noted in probation and parole. The incidence of substance abuse is currently so widespread among offender populations that several recent risk studies have demonstrated that drug or alcohol abuse no longer

TABLE 1

CORRECTION POPULATIONS
PERCENT CHANGE 1980 TO 1988

	1980	1988	% Change
Probation	1,118,097	2,356,483	111%
Jails	163,994	343,569	110%
Prison	329,821	627,588	90%
Parole	220,438	407,977	85%
Adult Arrests	6.1 million	8.5 million	39%
Reported Index Crimes	13.4 million	13.9 million	4%

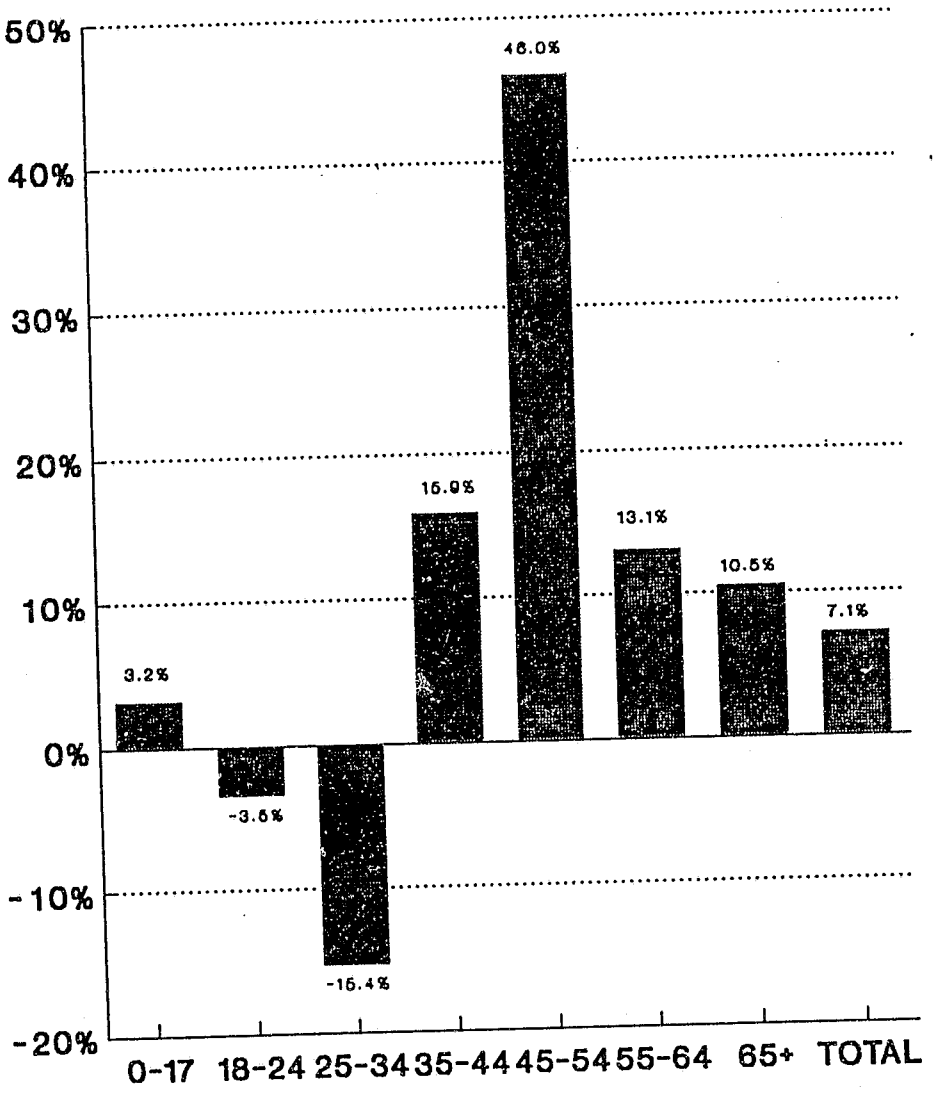
Sources: Historical Corrections Statistics in the United States, 1850-1984, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Uniform Crime Reports: Crime in the United States, 1980 and 1988, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Census of Local Jails, 1988, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

FIGURE A

PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION OF AGE GROUPS

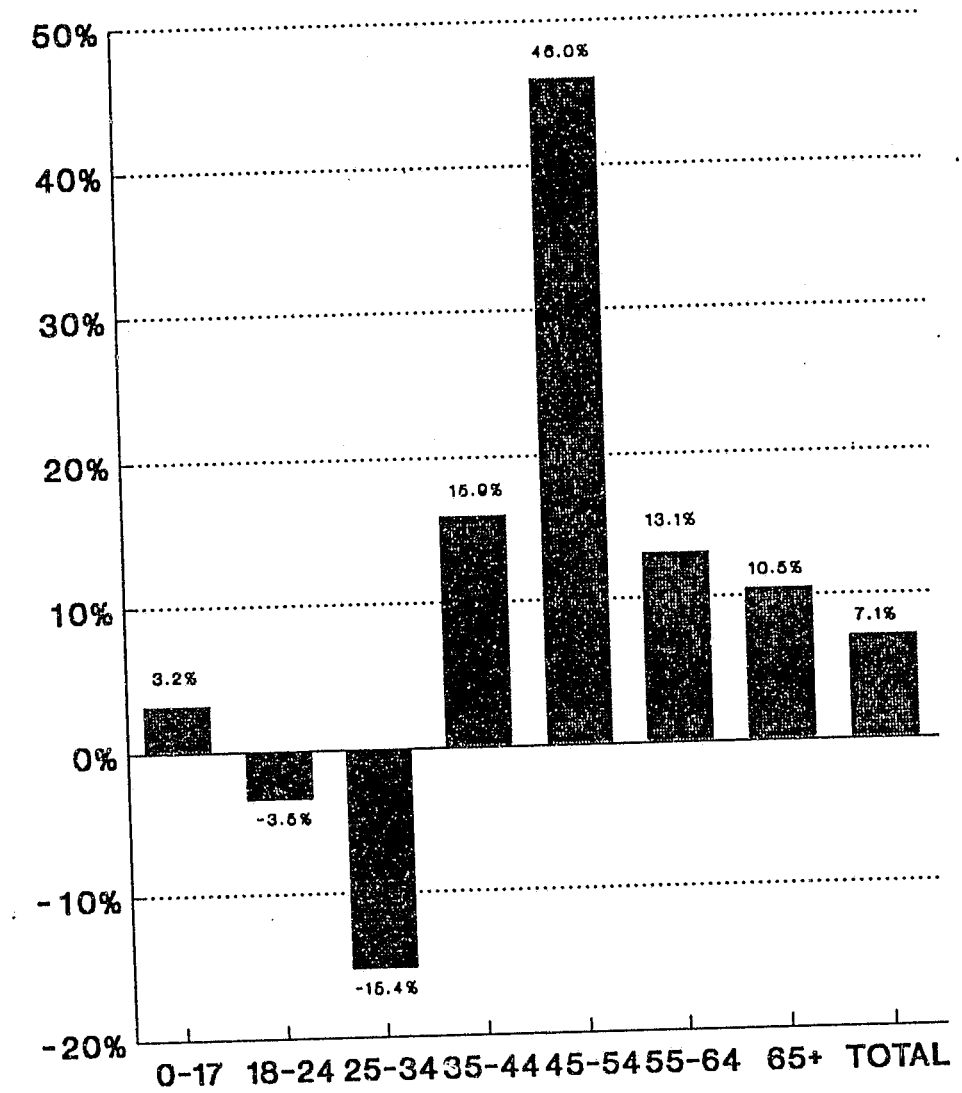


1990-2000

Source: Paine Webber Research

FIGURE A

PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION OF AGE GROUPS



1990-2000

Source: Paine Webber Research

TABLE 2

INCREASES IN DRUG OFFENSE PRISON ADMISSION FOR SELECTED STATES

States	Time Period	% Increase
Virginia	July 1986 - June 1989	136%
Michigan	July 1986 - June 1989	201%
Oklahoma	July 1986 - September 1989	174%
Florida	July 1986 - January 1989	168%
Tennessee	July 1986 - June 1989	128%
Illinois	July 1986 - June 1989	156%

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separates successes from failures. In essence, if nearly everyone in a population shares a characteristic, classification based on that characteristic is not possible.

Mandatory arrest and sentencing practices resulted in other changes as well. Most notably, drunk driving and domestic violence cases on probation and parole caseloads have increased dramatically in recent years. For example, in a recent study of probation in Iowa (NCCD, 1990), 47 percent of admissions were "Operating While Intoxicated" (OWI or drunk driving) cases. These two populations were virtually non-existent in probation/parole when most risk scales currently in use were developed 15 years ago. Hence, little is known regarding their applicability to these offender groups.

Changes in population parameters represent one reason why scale revalidation is needed. The fact that most agencies are using risk assessment instruments from another jurisdiction is of equal importance. Despite the NIC recommendation that risk assessment and outcome data be collected routinely so that periodic revalidation could be completed, few agencies have designed and implemented information systems that support such research. As a result, few agencies have validated risk instruments that are used to make important decisions about offenders.

Validation studies need to address questions regarding applicability of risk scales to offender subgroups. Offender base rates -- that is, rates of success/failure on probation and parole -- vary significantly by ethnicity, gender, and offense groups. It is important to know if a single instrument is capable of

effectively separating offenders based on risk for all of these subpopulations, or if different scales are required for various groups. Since women generally represent less than ten percent of an offender population, they have little influence in the statistical analyses used to develop risk assessment scales. Because most instruments used today were based primarily on male populations, their applicability to female offenders is a particularly significant issue.

In addition, decisions regarding high profile offenses, sex crimes, drug sales, and crimes of violence are important to both corrections officials and the general public. Information regarding recidivism rates and the ability of risk instruments to appropriately classify these offenders can help establish policy, enlighten the public, and defend agency practices when crises occur. Corrections, after all, is in the business of managing risk. While risk to the community cannot be completely controlled with anything less than total incapacitation, the public is right to insist that correctional decisions regarding supervision are based on the best information available. Data on the risk presented by various offense groups are becoming increasingly important to policy development and practice in probation and parole.

Finally, validation studies are needed simply to increase staff confidence in the instrument used. Staff turnover, changing offender profiles, new administrators with new policies and procedures, and increases in overall workload often result in a

loss of general agency knowledge regarding the origin and purpose of the classification system. In validation studies, staff concerns can be addressed and changes made that reflect current conditions and circumstances. Even if changes in scale design are relatively minor (or not required at all), data that demonstrate the effectiveness of the system will bolster staff confidence and diffuse the arguments of disbelievers.

In sum, due to changes in offender populations that occur over time (sometimes rather rapidly when public policy changes) and the need to examine the applicability of an instrument to subgroups of offenders, revalidation efforts should be completed periodically. While no rule of thumb can be applied to determine how frequently agencies should undertake such research, the degree and frequency of social and/or legislative changes determine when revalidation efforts should be undertaken.

In Oregon, despite the fact that at least two previous studies have produced positive results regarding the ability of the History of Risk to differentiate offender risk, the ORDOC sited several reasons underlying its need to validate the system at this point in its history including: 1) that neither of the previous studies completed a thorough validation on the offender population currently under the supervision of the CSB; 2) the History of Risk scale has undergone some changes from the original design; and 3) the reassessment scale has never been subjected to a formal evaluation. In addition the CSB identified several issues with the current RAS that their experience with its application have shown

to be problematic which were: 1) its counterintuitive scoring convention wherein higher risk scale scores indicate lower risk levels and vice versa; and 2) the narrow range of possible risk scales scores makes it difficult to modify cut-off scores in order to make adjustments for changes in workload levels.

D. GOALS OF THE VALIDATION RESEARCH

The overall goal of the validation process is to assess the current performance of the RAS and recommend specific steps that can be taken to improve its performance. In conducting this validation the examination of the current or any proposed RAS was designed to determine how well they exhibit certain properties associated with good classification systems. There are actually four specific properties that should be present in all good decision making systems including risk assessment. It is on these properties that the RAS was evaluated. These are:

- Validity
- Reliability
- Equity
- Utility

Validation studies, of course, directly examine the issue of scale validity. In its broadest context, validity means that a system accomplishes its objectives. A risk assessment instrument is valid if it separates groups of offenders based on rates of failure. When developing risk instruments, the goal is to achieve the maximum difference in failure rates possible. Experience

demonstrates that, in most instances, a four to one ratio or at least a difference of 30% in failure rates between the highest and lowest risk groups can generally be achieved.

The remaining properties -- reliability, equity, and utility -- should also be examined in a comprehensive evaluation of risk assessment. Reliability is present if the risk assessment score given an individual is the same regardless of who completes the scale. The best way to attain reliability is to use objective factors to rate risk, provide thorough definitions of items and item values, and adequately train staff in use of the instrument. Reliability and validity are inextricably linked, since errors in ratings obviously produce invalid results.

Equity goes beyond validity and reliability to require that use of given factors in risk assessment must be <u>fair</u> -- it does not discriminate against subgroups in a society -- and justifiable -- its use is consistent with broader social values (Clear, Baird, 1986). The issue of equity in scale construction and validation centers around areas of gender, ethnicity, and age. Various offender populations have substantially different rates of recidivism. This fact alone makes the identifying characteristic (e.g., male, under 25) "predictive." Because of bias in society and the criminal justice system, there are no absolutely "clean" criteria for equitable differentiation of offenders other than the current offense. Systems should, however, expunge factors that directly discriminate (such as ethnicity) and then monitor operations to determine the effects of risk assessment systems on

various offender populations. For this reason, validation studies should examine how the system works for males, females, the major ethnic groups in the population, and for various age breakdowns.

Utility is a basically pragmatic criterion. Risk assessment scales should be simple, efficient, and the relationships between risk factors and outcomes evident to staff (face validity). The most valid of scales will not benefit operations if not accepted and used appropriately by staff in the supervision process. Experience indicates that complex systems will be resisted by staff who, generally, already feel inundated with paperwork and case processing requirements of the legal system. Simplicity will also enhance rater reliability, as errors in scoring will be minimized. To enhance utility, validation efforts should seek to simplify scales whenever possible, provided such changes do not reduce the scale's ability to effectively separate risk groups.

II. GENERAL METHODOLOGY

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR VALIDATION

Based on the Request for Proposals issued by the ORDOC for the validation project and discussions with the Advisory Committee, the following set of specific research questions were established:

1. What are the established goals for the RAS in Oregon?

2. Does the design of the RAS make sense in light of these goals?

3. How does the Oregon RAS compare to similar systems which have been empirically validated in other jurisdictions? What evidence do these comparisons provide regarding the likelihood that the Oregon system will achieve the goals for which it was designed?

4. What is the level of accuracy and consistently with which line staff are able to apply the risk assessment scales?

5. What are the perceptions and experiences of CSB staff regarding the RAS in Oregon?

6. How well does the current RAS separate groups of offenders based on rates of success/failure and what steps can be taken to improve its performance in this area?

7. How well does the current RAS achieve the principle of using the least restrictive method for offender management? Can the performance of the RAS be improved in this area?

8. How well has the current system performed with specific types of offenders such as sex, race and offense subgroups. Can the system's performance be improved with these groups of offenders?

9. What has been the extent, direction and impact of the use of officer discretion in applying the RAS?

10. What has been the extent and direction of the movement of offenders between supervision levels brought about by the application of the RAS?

11. Are there specific ways the ORDOC can improve the performance and impact of the RAS by making changes in its design or implementation?

12. How can validation research be facilitated in the future and what issues should be addressed?

B. SOURCES OF DATA

NCCD utilized multiple sources of data to conduct the comprehensive validation process needed to address the research questions listed above which were:

1. Admissions Cohort - this was the principle source of data for the study and consisted of all RAS (initial assessment and reassessment) information on all offenders admitted to supervision in the first six months following the statewide implementation of the current system (i.e. September 1989 through February 1990). In addition to the RAS data on this admissions cohort of 10,211 offenders, data was also compiled on their demographic, criminal history and other background characteristics with possible relevance to the risk assessment process. Using this admissions cohort enabled NCCD to assess the application of the RAS in individual cases over the entire period of supervision. The acquisition of this portion of the database was greatly facilitated by the extensive RAS information maintained by the ORDOC on its computerized Offender Profile System (OPS).
2. Criminal History - while the OPS contained some elements of the criminal histories of the offenders in the study (e.g. prior periods of supervision or incarceration with the ORDOC), a complete record was required for this type of validation

research. To obtain these records NCCD and the ORDOC requested Law Enforcement Data Sheets (LEDS) on the 2,500 offenders selected for the admissions sample from the Oregon State Police which maintains the official state criminal history repository. In all, NCCD obtained LEDS on 2,185 offenders in the original sample. The acquisition of this portion of the data base allowed NCCD to compare an offender's performance over a follow-up period of eighteen months in relation to the risk assessments made about them. This information also allowed NCCD to examine alternative criminal history background criteria that might improve the performance of the current RAS.

3. Official Documents - NCCD obtained copies of official ORDOC documents which addressed the objectives and application of the current RAS. These documents consisted of official policies, regulations, procedures and instructions relative to the RAS. An examination of these documents enabled NCCD to identify the specific goals for the RAS established by the ORDOC.

4. Validation Research Studies - which contained assessment criteria empirically found to be effective in assessing risk of recidivism in other jurisdictions. These studies were used for comparisons with the Oregon system to assess the apparent face validity of the RAS criteria and to identify potential alternative factors.

5. Interrater Reliability Test - in order to assess the accuracy and consistency with which the RAS scales are applied, NCCD assisted the ORDOC in designing an interrater reliability study. In this study, a sample of actual offender case histories was scored by a sample of line officers and institutional counselors and compared against a scoring key for all RAS criteria. The results were compiled to ascertain the degree of accuracy and consistency in scoring achieved by these staff and to determine appropriate corrective actions to be taken where errors were identified.

6. Staff Survey - a survey of CSB staff attitudes and experiences with the current RAS was designed cooperatively by NCCD and the Advisory Committee and was distributed to CSB offices throughout the state. This survey was intended to supplement the other quantitative information described above by providing a qualitative view of the current RAS.

C. SELECTING THE OUTCOME CRITERION

One of the first steps that must be taken in validation research is the selection of the outcome measures. Common measures include arrests, convictions, (sometimes broken down into felonies and misdemeanors or assaultive/non-assaultive offenses) and revocations (often delineated by reason for revocation --new offense or technical violation of probation and parole). A few studies have attempted to use violations that did not result in revocation or created a scaled outcome measure which ranked

subsequent criminal behavior from best (no violations) to worst (new felony convictions for violent offenses).

There is no single outcome measure that can effectively incorporate all of the complexities involved in measuring criminal behavior on a rational basis. Rather, various measures present different advantages and disadvantages which must be carefully weighed in designing a validation study. Following discussions of various options, the Advisory Committee accepted NCCD's recommendation to use convictions as the selected outcome measure using multiple categorizations including misdemeanor, felony and violent felony convictions.

While using convictions is not without its disadvantages, the other options were considered more problematic. For example, using revocations as a outcome measure was rejected as the wide use of discretion in making this decision is more a representation of the officer's/system's response to violations than the frequency and severity offender behavior. Similarly, NCCD's experience with validation research has shown that more complicated scaling measures are often difficult to construct with available data sources and showed little improvement over simpler and more straightforward measures such as arrests and convictions.

Arrests and convictions both generally represent law-violating behavior and the correlation between the two measures is often so high that either can be used as the principle measure of recidivism without affecting the statistical analysis. However, arrests are in fact only allegations which in certain circumstances may have only

a limited relationship to actual criminal behavior. This is particularly true for high profile offenders such as parolees who are often arrested, questioned and released with no further action taken by the criminal justice system.

Convictions can also pose problems. For example, the required to obtain and record a conviction may be substantial and while the criminal behavior may have occurred within the study period, the conviction may not have thus misrepresenting these types of cases as "successes". This problem with convictions as an outcome measure is mitigated in studies using longer follow-up periods like this one which was an important consideration in selecting it as an outcome measure.

Further complicating the use of convictions is the fact that crime-reporting systems containing these data are far from reliable. They depend on local court personnel to properly record and enter these data. When studies have compared a variety of sources for this data such as state correctional systems, state criminal history repositories and national systems, serious inconsistencies and incomplete records have been found. The problem of reliability is mitigated if one assumes the errors and omissions are randomly distributed across all risk groups. This assumption is believed to be more defensible for convictions than arrests as an outcome measure.

Despite any remaining problems with using convictions as an outcome measure, NCCD's research has generally found that this

simpler and straightforward measure has proven adequate for the task of validation in most jurisdictions.

D. THE FOLLOW-UP PERIOD

When conducting a validation study, it is important that a standard follow-up period be used for all cases whenever possible. Some offenders may be on probation or parole for the entire period while others are discharged and spend only part of the follow-up under supervision. The variance in degree of control exerted on cases should be acknowledged, but unless some cases spend minimal time on supervision and/or supervision is particularly intrusive, the affect of the different length of probation or parole terms is probably negligible. In any event, it is more than offset by the value of standard follow-up periods.

In selecting the length of the follow-up period, two issues should be considered. First, the time frame analyzed should be long enough to capture the vast majority of cases that will have new violations reported -- arrests, convictions, revocations. Most research indicates that 18 months is adequate but that 24 to 36 months or longer is ideal. However, the length of the follow-up period should be chosen in context with the need to use cases recently admitted to probation or parole. When changes occur in legislation, policy, or social conditions, offender profiles can change substantially. Hence, studies strive to use the most recent admission or release cohort possible and still allow for an adequate follow-up period. For example, study cases admitted to

probation during the last six months of 1988 provide a reasonably contemporary sample, but still permit analysis of a 24 month "at risk" period for a study beginning in January 1991. However, if major legislative initiatives were enacted in January 1989 that resulted in a significant shift in probation profiles, shortening the follow-up period to 18 months may produce results more reflective of current conditions.

In Oregon the current risk assessment system, involving both the initial assessment scale (which is a slightly modified version of the Parole Board's History of Risk Scale) and the more recently developed risk reassessment scale, were pilot tested in July 1989 and implemented statewide beginning in September 1989. It is NCCD's understanding that the scales implemented at that time have operated without modification since then. In this case, NCCD recommended a standard 18 month follow-up period for the admissions cohort entering supervision between September 1989 and February 1990. This approach had several advantages including: 1) it provided a reasonably recent group of admissions for the study; 2) it provided for an adequate follow-up period by research standards; and 3) it provided a study sample of approximately 10,000 cases rendered subsamples of sufficient size to produce meaningful analyzes of outcomes for such groups as females offenders, drug or DUI offenders, etc.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. FACE VALIDITY

1. Introduction

The very first step in designing a structured decision-making tool, such as the ORDOC's RAS used to classify offenders under supervision, is to identify and clearly define what the tool(s) have been designed to accomplish. It is this goal(s) that establishes the framework for its design by determining the factors or criteria, weights and cut-off scores used in the risk assessment instruments. Ultimately, goals serve as the basis by which outcomes are evaluated in order to assess the scales' performance (i.e., validity).

Simply stated, validity is the extent to which the assessment system achieves its established goals. There are two types of validity on which the risk assessment system was evaluated: 1) face validity; and 2) empirical validity. Face validity refers to a heuristic appraisal that the design of the risk assessment system appears to make sense in light of its established goals. In other words, the rationale for the system is clear and the factors used to make the classification decisions are clearly related to that rationale.

Establishing empirical validity is the more difficult but more powerful test and is the final basis on which the appraisal of the system must rest. Empirical validity can only be assessed by applying the assessment system to actual cases, compiling the results and through a statistical analysis demonstrate that the

system's goals have been achieved. The methods NCCD employed in testing the empirical validity of the ORDOC's risk assessment system are discussed in later sections of this report. The remainder of this section presents the methods actually employed in examining its face validity.

2. Data Collection

In evaluating the face validity of the risk assessment system NCCD sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the system trying to accomplish (goals);
2. Is there consensus (or conflict) on the goals of the system;
3. Does the decision-making structure reflect the goals of the system; and
4. Do the items on the assessment scales bear a valid relationship to the goals and how is this known?

To answer these questions NCCD collected data from several sources including from: 1) DOC documents such as the mission statement governing the operations of the Community Service Branch and its policies and procedures governing the application of its risk assessment system; 2) a survey of key DOC policy-makers, administrators, managers and line staff regarding their perceptions of the goals of the system and the appropriateness of its design to meet these goals; and 3) criteria contained in risk assessment scales from other jurisdictions which are used for the classification of similar offender populations and themselves have been subject to empirical validations in recent years.

3. Data Analysis

To answer the questions regarding face validity of the risk assessment scales, NCCD conducted several different but related analyses of the data obtained from the sources listed above. First, NCCD conducted a content analysis of all pertinent DOC documents to assess their specificity and clarity in articulating the goals for the system. Specifically, NCCD identified all documents which address this issue and critiqued them for clarity, consistency, etc. In addition, where multiple goals were articulated, this analysis also examined whether there is a clear prioritization or hierarchy established.

The results of this content analysis of DOC documents formed the basis of specific questions and issues to be explored in the survey of policy-makers, administrators, managers and line staff regarding the goals of the system. NCCD analyzed responses from the surveys in regard to: 1) level of understanding about goals; 2) whether there is agreement or disagreement regarding goals; and 3) the degree to which respondents felt that the risk factors are or are not properly related to those goals.

Finally, NCCD examined validation studies from around the country to determine whether the Oregon risk factors have been shown empirically to be associated with offender outcomes in other jurisdictions. Taken together these analyses clearly determined the goals (formal and informal) of the assessment system and whether there was evidence from the experiences of other

jurisdictions that the design of the Oregon system can be reasonably expected to achieve its goals.

4. Results

a. Content Analysis of ORDOC Documents

In the first stages of the validation project NCCD identified and analyzed the content of all ORDOC documents that could contain a statement(s) of goals relative to the classification system. These statements were then compared with the design of the current system in order to determine the likelihood it will achieve its goals. This then constitutes an initial test of the face validity of the system.

With the assistance of the Advisory Committee, NCCD identified and reviewed the following documents:

- ORDOC Mission Statement
- Community Services Branch Mission Statement and Goals
- Case Management System (Community Services) Administrative Rule #78
- Oregon Casemanagement System, Classification
- Component, Instructions
- Allocation of Field Services Positions, Administrative Rule #169
- OCMS, Replacement Insert, Classification Component

NCCD's analysis revealed that these official documents contain a substantial set of goal statements regarding risk assessment that articulate the expectations for the system. The following are excerpts from these documents that address the classification system:

Source: ORDOC Mission Statement

1. The ORDOC's mission is to reduce the risk of criminal misconduct.....
2. .....the principle that the least restrictive method be used to manage offenders

Source: CSB Mission Statement

1. .....provide for the safety and protection of the public and the appropriate punishment and rehabilitation of the offender.
2. .....by supervising.....offenders in a safe, consistent and humane manner.....

Source: CSB Goals

1. .....deliver services that are prioritized according to limited risk control.....
2. Provide supervision and utilize resources based on accurately assessed risk and need with the case management system.
3. Ensure statewide conformance to.....the Case Management System through appropriate auditing and enforcement procedures.

Source: Case Management System (Community Services); Rule #78

1. Establish a level of statewide consistency for the classification and supervision of offenders.
2. Classify offenders based primarily on risk of recidivism, irrespective of felony or misdemeanor status.
3. Operate on the principle of limited risk control and utilize an objective risk assessment tool for making classification decisions.
4. Offenders will be classified according to the risk they pose to the community.
5. Definitions

   Risk of Violence: The identified potential of an offender to engage in or threaten to engage in behavior that constitutes physical force and/or the inflicting of injury on another person.

   Risk of Recidivism: The likelihood of an offender committing new criminal behavior while under supervision.

   Initial Risk Assessment: The initial assessment of risk will rely primarily on historical factors to predict the likelihood of recidivism. The initial risk assessment instrument will be completed as part of the new case procedures.

   Risk Reassessment: The ongoing reassessment of offender risk relies on a combination of both historical and current behavior factors in order to predict likelihood of recidivism.
6. Offenders will be reassessed a minimum of every six months for high, medium, and low level cases.

7. Each agency has the responsibility to ensure that OCMS data (e.g. risk assessment and reassessment data) is entered in a timely and accurate manner.

8. The ORDOC will subject the classification risk instruments to periodic validation in order to insure that the instruments are predicting risk within acceptable ranges.

Source: Instruction, Classification Component, OCMS

1. To ensure statewide consistency in the assessment of offender risk and the supervision of offenders.

2. To classify offenders primarily upon risk to recidivate, irrespective of felony or misdemeanor status. The instrument (initial risk assessment) and the risk reassessment instrument will be scored according to Department of Corrections instructions.

The key words or phrases relative to goals that were found in these were:

- To classify offender based primarily of risk of recidivism.
- Recidivism is defined as likelihood of new criminal behavior.
- That the least restrictive method be used to manage offenders.
- To ensure statewide consistency.
- That initial assessments be based on historical factors.
- That reassessment use both historical factors and current behavior.
- To establish a schedule under which classification actions must be taken.

From this review NCCD concluded that there is no apparent conflict in the goal statements internally - that is there are no statements of expectations that would tend to compete with each other (e.g stated goals of controlling recidivism versus providing treatment or administering punishment). In addition, the design of the current system which uses separate initial and reassessment instruments and the specific criteria they employ appears consistent with the stated goals of classification. This then is clear, albeit, limited evidence regarding the validity of the current classification system.

b. Staff Survey

This component of the evaluation was intended to gather information on the experiences with, and perceptions about, the RAS on the part of CSB personnel. To do so, NCCD designed a forced choice questionnaire wherein respondents were asked to select a response that most closely describes the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements about the RAS. The questionnaire uses a likert type response scale with four possible responses ranging from agree strongly to disagree strongly. The statements on the survey to which the staff were asked to respond were divided into three categories: 1) design issues - how well has the system been constructed; 2) implementation issues - how well has the system been put into operation; and 3) impact issues - what effect has the system had on parole and probation operations. A copy of the survey

form and the number and proportion of respondents selecting each response option is included as Appendix B to this report.

The survey was distributed to each CSB office in the state through the local OCMS Specialist. The specialist was responsible for distributing the survey to all staff in their office who have experience with the RAS (i.e. administrative staff, investigators or some others may not). They were also responsible for answering questions, collecting completed surveys, encouraging staff to complete the survey, and forwarding responses to the designated repository at central office.

Using this process, NCCD obtained 250 completed surveys. The vast majority of the respondents identified themselves as officers (87.1 percent) who supervised general caseloads (52.8 percent). It should be noted that in reporting the results of the survey, the proportions reported do not include those who did not provide a response to a particular question.

Overall, the staff responses were split on issues of design and implementation. In other words, the respondents had about as many positive opinions about the RAS as negative ones in these areas. However, the pattern of responses was very different in regard to impact. Here the majority of respondents offered negative opinions on most aspects of the system's effect on probation and parole operations.

The following is a synopsis of the positive and negative findings from the survey by category. The findings are characterized as positive if a clear majority of the respondents

were supportive of some attribute of the RAS whereas the reverse is true for the negative findings.

Design Issues

Positive Findings

- Initial assessment criteria are appropriate
- Reclassification schedule is appropriate
- Not difficult to score
- Separate initial and reassessment scales are needed
- Balances history and behavior information
- Override allows professional judgement
- Reasons for override reflect other risk factors

Negative Findings

- Initial criteria weightings
- Reassessment criteria
- Reassessment weightings
- Doesn't consider professional judgement
- Not predictive of reoffending
- Need supplementary instruments for special offenders

Implementation Issues

Positive Findings

- Staff are knowledgeable about RAS development
- Places offenders in appropriate supervision levels
- Officers use overrides appropriately

- Staff have received adequate training
- Supervision assignments are fair and consistent
- RAS information is used regularly by the Department
- Staff notified of system changes
- RAS data is timely and accurate
- Staff training, policies and procedures, and MIS data assist proper implementation

Negative Findings

- Policies and procedures are not clear and complete
- Assessment processes vary between CSB offices
- Staff have never seen examples of how RAS data are used
- RAS data is not accurate
- Lack of prior record information, poor assessment and scoring instruments, and excessive officer workload interfere with proper implementation.

Impact Issues

Positive Findings

- Helps staff do their jobs
- Helps reduce staff liability

Negative Findings

- Decisions are not the least restrictive
- Community programming is not improved
- Does not help prioritize offenders for program resources
- Doesn't help identify special supervision problems

- Doesn't increase successful completions of supervision
- Doesn't reduce assaults on staff
- Doesn't reduce job stress
- Doesn't reduce absconscions
- Doesn't reduce serious offenses

c. Cross-Jurisdictional Comparison of Risk Assessment Criteria

The final test of face validity involved a comparison of RAS criteria with criteria used in other risk assessment systems from other jurisdictions that have been empirically validated. This is a legitimate test in that research results have consistently shown that similar or universal criteria have been identified for assessing risk across time and populations when these systems have been subjected to validation.

This type of comparison can serve three important purposes. First, if the comparison reveals that RAS criteria are found in validated systems in other jurisdictions this would constitute indirect but important support for the use of these criteria in Oregon. Second, if the comparison reveals that some RAS criteria are not found in most other validated systems, these findings would suggest that these criteria could be deleted without reducing the performance of the current RAS. Finally, if the comparison reveals criteria used in many other validated systems but are not used in the RAS, these criteria should be considered as potential alternatives that might improve the performance of the current system.

The first step in conducting this comparison involved identifying recently validated risk assessment systems from other jurisdictions and then obtaining the documentation for their research studies. Since NCCD has been very active in validation research a number of studies were available from NCCD's own project files. To expand the search, NCCD also contacted the NIC Information Center in Boulder Colorado to obtain any other studies that have been conducted.

This search process ultimately identified risk assessment systems in nine jurisdictions which had been validated in recent years and for which documentation was available. The jurisdictions and agencies with validated risk assessment systems used in this comparison are listed below.

- Tennessee Board of Paroles
- Iowa Department of Corrections
- Wisconsin Bureau of Community Corrections
- Kansas Department of Corrections
- South Carolina Board of Parole and Community Corrections
- Colorado Judicial Department
- Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
- Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Court of Common Pleas
- Nebraska Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation

The next stage of the comparison involved completing an inventory of the validated risk assessment criteria used in these

other jurisdictions. Table 3 summarizes the results of this inventory for initial risk assessment instruments used in these nine jurisdictions included in the comparison. Table 3 shows both the general type (category) as well as the specific criteria used in these nine initial risk assessment systems. For example, Table 3 shows that all of the comparison states include one or more risk assessment criteria based on prior convictions. However, Table 3 also reveals that there is substantial variation in the specific way prior convictions are assessed across these different systems (e.g. felony versus misdemeanor, adult versus juvenile).

The final stage of the comparison involved incorporating all the RAS criteria into the inventory. Table 3 shows the completed inventory wherein RAS criteria are compared with criteria used in the nine comparison states.

The results of this comparison provide significant support for the criteria used on the initial RAS. Specifically, Table 3 shows that five of the six RAS criteria are used in most if not all of the other jurisdictions. These include "prior convictions" (two criteria), "age", "history of supervision" and "substance abuse". In regard to prior convictions most others use "number of felony convictions" similar to the RAS criterion. However, the RAS criterion regarding "felony conviction in the last 3 years" is not found in any other system. This finding raises questions about whether this second prior convictions criterion adds predictive power to the RAS. This question will be empirically tested later in the validation process.

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF RISK ASSESSMENT CRITERIA USED FOR PROBATION AND PAROLE CLASSIFICATION BY THE ORDOC WITH CRITERIA EMPLOYED BY OTHER VALIDATED RISK REASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

	JURISDICTION									
CRITERIA	OR	TN	IA	WS	KS	SC	CO	IL	OH	NB
Prior Convictions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
# Felony	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
# Misdemeanor			X							
Past 3 Years?	X									
# Adult						X				
Juvenile				X			X		X	
Prior Incarcerations	X	X	X			X			X	
# Juvenile Commitments			X							
# All Types	X	X				X				
# Adult									X	
Age	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
At Current Offense	X									
At First Conviction		X	X	X		X	X	X		
Current Age		X	X		X	X				X
At First Felony					X				X	X
At Admission								X	X	
History of Supervision	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Includes Violations	X									
# Prior Revocations		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
# Prior Supervisions			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Substance Abuse	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Any History		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Last 3 Years	X									
Current Offense		X								
Major DR's (12 months prior)		X								
Martial/Family Status		X								X
Sex			X							X
Current or Past Offenses			X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Burglary, Robbery, Theft, Forgery, Fraud, Assault, Sex, Weapons, Public Order			X	X	X		X	X		X
Assaultive Offense (5 years)				X					X	
# Address Changes			X	X			X	X		
Companions			X		X					

Common to all systems is an "age" criterion, however, assessing age "at current offense" is unique to the RAS. The other systems rely on age "at first conviction" or "current age". A similar observation is made regarding the "history of supervision" and "substance abuse" criteria which are common to all systems, however, the RAS variations on these criteria are unique. These findings raise questions about whether some other variations on these three criteria could improve the performance of the RAS, a question that will also be tested later in this validation process. The comparison produced somewhat less support for the number of "prior incarcerations" criterion on the RAS which is found on only four of the nine other systems.

Finally, the comparison revealed that there are two types of criteria which are found in almost all other validated systems which are not used in the RAS. These criteria relate to the type of "current or past offenses" and the "employment" status or record of the offender. These findings suggest that these type of criteria might be potential candidates for alternative or additional criteria for the RAS. Whether these new criteria could improve the performance of the RAS will be tested in the validation process.

The comparison of risk reassessment systems also revealed significant support for the RAS criteria. Table 4 shows the reassessment criteria from the RAS and those used in nine other jurisdictions. Table 4 shows that two of the three history criteria on the reassessment are also found in all or most other systems. These common reassessment criteria are "prior convictions" and

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF RISK REASSESSMENT CRITERIA USED FOR PROBATION AND PAROLE CLASSIFICATION BY THE ORDOC WITH CRITERIA EMPLOYED BY OTHER VALIDATED RISK REASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

	JURISDICTION							
CRITERIA	OR	TN	IA	WS	KS	IL	CO	OH
Prior Convictions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
# Felony	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
# Misdemeanors			X					
# Violent Offense		X						
Juvenile				X		X	X	
Age		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
At First Conviction		X	X	X		X	X	
At Arrest First Felony					X			X
At Admission								X
Prior Incarcerations	X	X	X					
# All Prior	X	X						
Prior Juvenile			X					
Commitment Offense		X						
History of Supervision	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Includes Violations?	X							
# Prior Revocations		X	X	X	X	X	X	
# Prior Supervisions			X		X			
Current or Past Offenses								
Burglary, Robbery, Theft, Fraud, Assault, Weapons, Public Order			X	X	X	X	X	
Address Changes Last 12 Months				X		X	X	
Sex			X					
Employment							X	
	Rated Since Last Assessment							
Arrested Since Last Assessment		X	X			X		
Substance Abuse	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Response to Conditions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Employment	X	X	X	X	X	X		
# Address Changes	X							
Companions/Associates		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Problems with Current Living			X	X	X	X	X	
Use of Community Resources			X	X	X	X	X	
Attitude								X

"history of supervision". The RAS variation of the "history of supervision" criterion, however, is unique among reassessment systems and suggests that modification may improve performance.

Some other findings from the comparison of reassessment criteria suggest potential modifications to the RAS. Table 4 also shows that most of the other reassessment systems use "age" and "current or past offenses" criteria rather than "prior incarcerations" on the criminal history section of their reassessment instruments.

Table 4 provides support for several of the RAS reassessment criteria regarding behavior while under supervision. Table 4 shows that "substance abuse", "response to the conditions of supervision" and "employment" are common to reassessment systems. On the other hand, the "number of address changes" is unique to the RAS.

Finally, Table 4 shows that there a several criteria used in many other reassessment systems that are not found in the RAS. These criteria are "companions", "problems with current living arrangements" and "use of community resources". These later findings suggest that there are alternative criteria that warrant consideration for inclusion in the RAS.

Overall, the comparison of initial and reassessment criteria from the RAS with criteria used on other validated systems produced very favorable results. Many of the RAS criteria are common to most other systems which is significant support for the face validity of the current system. However, the comparison also revealed important differences between RAS criteria and those used in other systems

which suggest directions for possible modification to the RAS. These differences involved both variations in the way certain common criteria (e.g. prior convictions) are coded as well as the omission of several criteria common to systems other than the RAS. These findings suggested specific directions for the empirical analysis of individual criterion performance presented later in this report. Ultimately, it is this direct evidence on the performance of various criteria that will inform decisions regarding modifications to the design of the RAS.

B. RELIABILITY OF SCORING

1. Introduction

Another important element in an effective risk assessment system is the degree of consistency in the scoring of an individual case across all line staff. Consistency or reliability is present if the risk assessment scores for individual criterion in an individual case are the same regardless of which staff member completes the scoring. The best ways to obtain reliability is to use objective factors to assess risk, identify and provide adequate sources of information for scoring, provide thorough definitions of items and item values, and adequately train staff in the proper application of the assessment scale. Reliability is crucial as it is inextricably linked to validity since inconsistency in ratings produce invalid results which will not achieve the goal(s) for which the system was designed.

2. Data Collection

To evaluate the ability of line staff to accurately and consistently apply the risk assessment scales, NCCD assisted the ORDOC staff in conducting an interrater reliability study. For this study a group of line staff were given the same cases to assess and the degree of agreement was calculated. Specifically, a random sample of probation and parole officers was identified using the AS400 Employee Data Table maintained by the ORDOC. A total sample of 80 officers was drawn which was stratified by location (County CSB office) to ensure statewide representation among the raters. While an officer from every county could not be included in the sample, most counties were represented in the sample.

The sample was then divided in half with 40 officers selected for the rater sample and the remaining 40 designated as substitutes to serve as raters should a selected officer in their county be unavailable for the scheduled rating sessions. The sample was completed with the addition of 5 Institution Counselors (2 from SCI; 2 from EOCI and 1 from OSP) who are responsible for the completion of initial risk assessments for inmates being released to parole supervision.

The next step in designing the interrater reliability study involved selecting test cases to be assessed by the officers selected as raters. Using the active case listing from the Offender Profile System a stratified random sample of cases were identified. The sample was drawn in such a way as to insure that the cases included: 1) offenders under supervision for less than 6 months; 2)

offenders under supervision more than six months; 3) parolees and probationers; 3) males and females; 4) minorities; and 5) sex and drug offenders.

In all, ten cases were randomly selected to be used for initial risk assessment ratings and another ten cases were selected for risk reassessment ratings. These sample cases were reviewed by the four members of the CSB's Operational Review Team who selected 10 of the 20 sample cases (5 initial and 5 reassessment cases) for actual use during the rating sessions. The team's review served several purposes including: 1) selecting those cases that were considered representative of the range (e.g. types of offenders, complexity of scoring) of cases subject to risk assessment; and 2) that case files contained sufficient information to complete the assessments.

After selecting the final rating cases, the review removed existing assessments from the files and developed a scoring key for each case. The key represented the most accurate assessment of the case that could be arrived at by team members.

To conduct the study, the officers selected as raters were convened at three separate testing locations. Specifically, 20 officers were convened in the Portland area, another 20 in the Eugene-Salem area and the 5 Institution Counselors in the Pendeleton area. Each rating session was coordinated and monitored by a CSB staff member from central office. Each session was conducted over a several hour period in which the officers were required to complete initial assessments or reassessments on all

the sample cases. To make the study conditions as realistic as possible, the officers were given an average time limit of 30 minutes per case which closely approximates the time they would normally have under actual working conditions. It should also be mentioned that the officers were allowed to record their scores anonymously to eliminate concerns that the interrater reliability study would be used as a basis for individual performance evaluations.

3. Data Analysis

Once all the study cases had been assessed by the raters, the completed forms and the scoring keys were forwarded to NCCD where they were key entered in preparation for statistical analysis. For the analysis NCCD computed the proportion of correct responses by comparing officer ratings on individual assessment and reassessment criteria for each study case with the "correct" rating on the scoring key developed by the Operational Review Team. The proportion of correct ratings was also computed for individual criteria across all of the study cases. Finally, NCCD computed the proportion of officers that arrived at the correct total risk score as well the proportion of officers whose total risk score would have resulted in the correct supervision level assignment. This later analysis is important in determining the impact that scoring errors on individual criterion would have had on the final classification assignment excluding override considerations. The results of this analysis are presented separately for initial risk assessment and reassessments as Tables 4 and 5.

TABLE 5

INTER-RATER RELIABILITY OF THE INITIAL RISK ASSESSMENT SCALE

	PERCENTAGE CORRECT SCORING					
N =	44	43	44	43	46	220
	CASE					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	Total
A. Prior Felony Convictions	95.5	76.7	63.6	20.9	84.8	68.0
B. Prior Incarcerations	95.5	76.7	93.2	81.4	82.6	85.1
C. Felonies in Last 3 Years	100.0	95.4	65.9	60.5	93.5	82.4
D. Age at Offense	93.2	55.8	79.6	88.4	93.5	81.5
E. Present Supervision Violations	100.0	79.1	61.4	39.5	95.7	74.8
F. Substance Abuse	95.4	95.4	88.6	18.6	78.3	74.3
Total Score	81.8	32.6	25.0	18.6	58.7	43.2
% Correct Classified	93.2	97.7	63.6	90.7	67.4	82.3

4. Results of the Interrater Reliability Study

Table 5 presents the percentage of correct scoring by raters for the individual initial risk assessment criteria for the five study cases. In total the interrater reliability study produced 220 ratings on each of the six initial risk assessment criteria. In other words the results are based on 220 instances of officers scoring a particular criterion against the study cases.

In evaluating the results, correct scoring above 80% was generally considered acceptable. However, the standard may vary with individual criteria. For example, simpler criteria such as "age at offense" may be held to a higher standard (e.g. 90 -100%) where other more complex criteria such as "prior felony convictions" would not.

Applying this standard to the results presented in Table 5 show that three of the initial risk assessment criteria (B,C, and D) had a correct scoring or accuracy "rate" of over 80% while the remaining three criteria (A,E and F) did not. Upon closer examination however, the scoring patterns across the individual study cases are significant. Specifically, accuracy rates were lower for certain cases than across all cases included in the study. For example, criterion A which had the lowest accuracy rate at 68 percent of all initial assessment criteria actually had accuracy rates well above the standard for cases 1 and 5. On the other hand its lower overall rate can be attributed largely to the 20 percent accuracy rate on case 4. This has important implications for corrective action as these results show that scoring problems

with the initial risk assessment criteria are case specific rather than universal.

Table 5 also shows the cumulative effect of scoring errors across all initial risk assessment criteria. Specifically, Table 5 shows that an accuracy rate of only 43 percent on total risk assessment scores across all five study cases. Further, that study cases 2, 3 and 4 produced especially low accuracy rates on total risk scores.

Finally Table 5 shows the effect of scoring errors on supervision level assignments. Table 5 shows that even though the accuracy rates for total scores was very low, the percentage of cases that would have been correctly classified using those scores is acceptable at 82 percent. This is the result of the flexibility of the RAS which uses a range of scores (e.g. 0 - 11) to set the supervision level. This means that small discrepancies in scoring will not usually produce errors in classification assignments. However, classification error will be higher for cases in which the correct total score lies at or near the cut-off point between levels.

Table 6 presents the accuracy rates for individual reassessment criteria on the five study cases. Overall the seven risk reassessment criteria received 192 ratings each by the raters. Using the evaluation standard discussed earlier, Table 6 shows much lower accuracy rates for the reassessment criteria than those found for initial assessments. In fact, the total accuracy rates on

TABLE 6

INTER-RATER RELIABILITY OF THE RISK REASSESSMENT SCALE

	PERCENTAGE CORRECT SCORING					
N=	39	38	38	39	38	192
	CASE					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	Total
A. Prior Felonies	100.0	73.7	29.0	71.8	84.2	70.8
B. Prior Incarcerations	100.0	84.2	60.5	64.1	76.3	67.2
C. Present Supervision Violations	41.0	63.2	60.5	94.9	28.9	56.9
D. Substance Abuse	46.2	68.4	13.2	87.2	60.5	47.2
E. Response to Conditions	25.6	73.7	68.4	94.9	55.3	62.6
F. Employment	66.7	97.4	94.7	87.2	50.0	77.9
G. Address Change	79.5	97.4	97.4	38.5	15.8	64.6
Total Score	25.6	24.3	5.3	20.5	21.1	19.3
% Correct Classified	61.5	84.2	5.3	100.0	100.0	63.5

the reassessment cases are well below the .80 percent for all seven criteria. Further, Table 6 shows that accuracy rates on total risk were very low on every study case. However and again, the flexibility of a narrow scoring range (0 - 12) produced classification assignment ratings for three of the study cases that were well above the accuracy standard.

Overall the results of the interrater reliability study were more favorable regarding the accuracy of scoring on the initial risk assessment criteria. Here scoring errors were found to be more case specific. On the other hand, the study revealed much more widespread scoring errors using the risk reassessment criteria. In both instances, however, the impact of scoring errors on the individual criteria was mitigated by the relatively high rates of correct supervision level assignments.

C. IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS

1. Introduction

Although risk assessment is widely used in community corrections, the field is not entirely clear on what it actually represents. For example, several different terms have become associated with risk assessment in community corrections: chief among these are prediction and classification. These terms are often used interchangeably, yet connote very different properties of risk assessment.

Prediction, by definition, is more precise than classification. According to Webster, prediction " declares in

advance on the basis of observation, experience, or scientific reason." To predict accurately in any field is difficult; to predict human behavior accurately is especially complex as so many factors contribute to determining how individuals will act. Classification, on the other hand, is simply "a systematic arrangement in groups or categories according to established criteria."

While accurate prediction would greatly benefit corrections and society, it has not proven feasible in criminal justice. Research results in this area have consistently shown that our ability to predict criminal behavior is modest at best. Specifically, even the best risk scales explain little of the variance in offender outcomes -- 8 percent to 15 percent is common. But if simple classification is the goal, the degree of variance in criminal activity explained is of little consequence. What is important is the degree to which offenders in different risk groups perform differently. Valid risk instruments achieve significant differences in rates of recidivism among risk groups -- the greater the differences the better the instrument.

It is based on this experience that NCCD suggests the following more refined and realistic purpose statement which more properly reflects the relationship between assessment tools and offender outcomes.

The purpose of risk assessment instruments is to separate groups of offenders to the maximum extent possible based on rates of success/failure. Therefore, the value of risk instruments should

be based on their ability to separate offender groups rather than their ability to explain variance in criminal behavior.

It is this perspective that NCCD employed in conducting the validation research in Oregon which was designed to answer the following questions regarding the impact and effectiveness state's initial risk assessment and reassessment scales.

1. How well does the initial risk assessment and reassessment instruments currently used separate offender groups based on rates of success/failure?
2. Can the scales' abilities to separate risk groups be increased through: a) different value aggregations within risk factors; b) different weights for risk factor values; c) the addition of new variables to the risk scales; d) the deletion of factors currently used; or e) different cut-off scores for risk groups?
3. How do the current scales perform for population subgroups including various ethnic groups, female offenders, and special offender groups?

2. Data Collection

In order to conduct this portion of the validation research, information about Oregon offenders under probation and parole supervision was required in three areas; 1) risk criteria scores from initial assessments and reassessments; 2) demographic characteristics such as age, race and sex; and 3) outcome information from a follow-up period.

The item scores (and raw scores) and offender characteristics were available from the ORDOC's Offender Profile System (OPS). To collect this data NCCD requested and obtained an extract file from the ORDOC Research Section which contained the required data elements on a cohort of admissions.

The follow-up data consisting of officially recorded criminal behavior was available from the Oregon State Police, which is the state criminal history repository, in the form of Law Enforcement Data Sheets (LEDS). The criminal history information contained on the LEDS was coded according to NCCD specifications using a specially designed data collection form (Appendix C) by volunteer, paid Probation Officers in Washington County who were familiar with the interpretation of LEDS data. The coded LEDS data were then key entered at NCCD's offices and merged with the OPS data for analysis.

3. Sampling Strategy

The Advisory Committee approved NCCD's recommendation to select the validation sample from an admission cohort comprised of all offenders admitted to supervision between September 1989 and February 1990. This particular cohort selection had several important advantages. First, it covers the earliest period following the statewide implementation of the current RAS and allowed for a uniform follow-up period of eighteen months for all offenders selected for the sample. This admissions cohort is of sufficient size (N = 10,211) to produce a sample and subsamples of

sufficient size to address questions of validity for specific subpopulations such as females, racial and ethnic groups, as well as specific offense groups.

Clearly, larger sample sizes are needed to study such subgroups as the greater the number of breakdowns the larger the sample size required. Ideally, each subsample analyzed would be comprised of at least three to four hundred cases. This was not always possible for the smaller subgroups such as female offenders. Obviously, results from small samples must be interpreted with caution, while larger samples produce greater confidence in study results.

The selection of this cohort did present a particular problem. NCCD's initial analysis revealed that only 70 percent (7,123 offenders) of the admissions cohort had initial assessment data recorded on the OPS. This meant that although the RAS had been implemented statewide for all offenders, the entry of RAS data was not yet occurring for all offenders. NCCD conducted similar analyses of more recent admissions cohorts to determine if more complete RAS data would be available from the OPS for these groups. These analyses revealed that more complete RAS data from the OPS is only available for offender cohorts admitted in or after the last six months of 1991. Since these more recent cohorts would substantially reduce the available follow-up period it was decided to retain the original admissions cohort for validation sampling.

NCCD selected a 20 percent random sample (N= 2,000) from this admissions cohort which was stratified by the key offender

subgroups of interest to the ORDOC. After an analysis of the initial sample was completed, it showed deficiencies in the size of certain subgroup populations. NCCD then implemented a supplementary sampling strategy (i.e. oversampling) which added an additional 500 offenders to the sample to allow for the subgroups analysis of interest to the ORDOC. Once the final sample (and over sample) had been selected and approved by the Advisory Committee, NCCD generated a list of names and other identifiers of the sample cases which was submitted to ORDOC in order to obtain the LEDS from the state police. The LEDS for the sample cases were then coded and key entered for analysis as described above.

4. Characteristics of the Oregon Risk Assessment Sample

In selecting the validation sample from the admissions cohort it was essential that its characteristics match those of the most recent admissions so that results from the study would be applicable to the current offender population. In other words, the objective was to identify recent admissions trends that should be taken into account in selecting the sample. To do so, NCCD first compared the September 1989 to February 1990 admissions cohort with the cohort admitted to supervision between July and December 1992 (the most recent six month cohort available at the commencement of the study).

Tables 7, 8 and 9 present the comparisons of the two admissions cohorts on some critical sampling characteristics (status, sex, race, offense, age and risk level). For the most

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF 1989 AND 1992
OREGON ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES
BY STATUS, SEX AND RACE

Cohort Characteristics	1989		1992	
	Cases	% Cases	Cases	% Cases
Supervision Status:				
Probation	7,092	69%	6,386	69%
Parole	3,132	31%	2,941	31%
Sex:				
Male	8,410	83%	7,727	84%
Female	1,695	17%	1,513	16%
Race:				
Asian	38	0.4%	59	0.6%
African American	822	8.0%	809	8.7%
Hispanic	458	4.5%	716	7.7%
Native American	195	1.9%	159	1.7%
White	8,578	83.9%	7,492	80.3%
Other	133	1.4%	92	1.0%

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF 1989 AND 1992
OREGON ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY SERVICE
BY OFFENSE

Cohort Characteristics	1989		1992	
	Cases	% Cases	Cases	% Cases
Offense Group:				
A. Assault	584	5.7%	790	8.5%
B. Homicide	86	0.8%	85	0.9%
C. Rape	141	1.4%	169	1.8%
D. Kidnapping	36	0.4%	27	0.3%
E. Robbery	491	4.8%	442	4.7%
F. Sodomy	108	1.1%	100	1.1%
G. Sex Abuse	251	2.5%	349	3.7%
H. Arson	35	0.3%	38	0.4%
I. Burglary	1,127	11.0%	921	9.9%
J. Forgery	373	3.6%	292	3.1%
K. Theft	1,055	10.3%	896	9.6%
L. Vehicle Theft	370	3.6%	351	3.8%
M. Driving	1,452	14.2%	1,626	17.4%
N. Drugs	2,036	19.9%	1,751	18.8%

TABLE 9

COMPARISON OF 1989 AND 1992
OREGON ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY SERVICE
BY AGE

Cohort Characteristics	1989		1992	
	Cases	% Cases	Cases	% Cases
Age at Admission:				
17 - 20	1,165	11.4%	998	10.7%
21 - 25	2,303	22.5%	2,038	21.9%
26 - 30	2,434	23.8%	1,876	20.1%
31 - 35	1,809	17.7%	1,786	19.0%
36 - 40	1,176	11.5%	1,212	13.0%
40+	1,323	12.9%	1,415	15.1%
Unknown	14	0.1%	20	0.2%

COMPARISON OF 1989 AND 1992
OREGON ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY SERVICE
BY RISK LEVEL

Cohort* Characteristics	1989		1992	
	Cases	% Cases	Cases	% Cases
Initial Risk Classification:				

part, the comparisons do not show dramatic changes in offender characteristics. Supervision status, sex and race are nearly identical in the two cohorts, however, the 1992 cohort is slightly older. Some changes can be noted in offense groups and initial risk levels. Offenders admitted to supervision in 1992 are slightly more likely to have an assaultive/rident offense history (offense groups A through G). Another committing offense trend, which NCCD has observed in other jurisdictions, is an increase in driving offenses from 14.2 percent in 1989 to 17.4 percent in 1992. The greatest change, however, appears to be in the higher proportion of offenders scoring "high" on the current initial risk assessment scale (21 percent in 1989 versus 27 percent in 1992).

Based on this comparison NCCD's approach involved drawing a sample from the 1989 - 1990 admissions cohort that reflects both the risk assessment and supervision status distribution of the 1992 admissions. As Tables 10, 11 and 12 show, this validation sample drawn from the 1989 - 1990 admissions cohort has essentially the same status, sex, race, offense, age and risk characteristics as the 1992 admissions group. Additional offenders were later drawn from the 1989 - 1990 cohort and added to this base sample to increase the size of specific subgroups for selected analysis discussed later in this report.

For the 2,000 offenders in the initial risk assessment sample, LEDS were located and coded for 1,821 cases. The 179 offenders for whom no LEDS could be found were somewhat more likely to be low risk probationers (i.e., individuals likely to have an abbreviated

TABLE 10

COMPARISON OF 1989 SAMPLE AND ALL 1992 OREGON ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES BY STATUS, SEX AND RACE

Cohort Characteristics	1989 Sample		1992	
	Cases	% Cases	Cases	% Cases
Supervision Status:				
Probation	1,380	69%	6,386	69%
Parole	620	31%	2,941	31%
Sex:				
Male	1,664	83%	7,727	84%
Female	336	17%	1,513	16%
Race:				
Asian	13	0.7%	59	0.6%
African American	181	9.1%	809	8.7%
Hispanic	96	4.8%	716	7.7%
Native American	34	1.7%	159	1.7%
White	1,672	83.6%	7,492	80.3%
Other	4	0.1%	92	1.0%

TABLE 11

COMPARISON OF 1989 SAMPLE AND ALL 1992
OREGON ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY SERVICE
BY OFFENSE

Cohort Characteristics	1989 Sample		1992	
	Cases	% Cases	Cases	% Cases
Offense Group:				
A. Assault	149	7.5%	790	8.5%
B. Homicide	32	1.6%	85	0.9%
C. Rape	30	1.5%	169	1.8%
D. Kidnapping	8	0.4%	27	0.3%
E. Robbery	109	5.5%	442	4.7%
F. Sodomy	29	1.5%	100	1.1%
G. Sex Abuse	59	3.0%	349	3.7%
H. Arson	10	0.5%	38	0.4%
I. Burglary	206	10.3%	921	9.9%
J. Forgery	70	3.5%	292	3.1%
K. Theft	198	9.9%	896	9.6%
L. Vehicle Theft	71	3.6%	351	3.8%
M. Driving	315	15.8%	1,626	17.4%
N. Drugs	406	20.3%	1,751	18.8%
O. Escape	8	0.4%	16	0.2%
P. Other	201	10.1%	1,003	10.8%
Unknown	99	5.0%	471	5.0%

TABLE 12

COMPARISON OF 1989 SAMPLE AND ALL 1992 OREGON ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY SERVICE BY AGE

Cohort Characteristics	1989 Sample		1992	
	Cases	% Cases	Cases	% Cases
Age at Admission:				
17 - 20	170	8.5%	998	10.7%
21 - 25	445	22.3%	2,038	21.9%
26 - 30	444	22.2%	1,876	20.1%
31 - 35	363	18.2%	1,786	19.0%
36 - 40	260	13.0%	1,212	13.0%
41 +	315	15.9%	1,415	15.1%
Unknown	--	--	20	0.2%

COMPARISON OF 1989 SAMPLE AND ALL 1992 OREGON ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY SERVICE BY RISK LEVEL

Cohort* Characteristics	1989 Sample		1992*	
	Cases	% Cases	Cases	% Cases
Initial Risk Classification:				
0 - 6 High	539	27%	2,145	27%
7 - 8 Medium	406	20%	1,590	20%
9 - 11 Low	1,055	53%	4,124	53%

*Cases with initial risk assessment available.

prior record), but no serious sample bias appears to be introduced by excluding them. For instance, the initial sample of 2,000 offenders was composed of 69% probation and 31% parole cases. Sample offenders for whom LEDS were found were distributed 67% probation and 33% parole. Even smaller differences are observed for sex, race, age and offense characteristics between the initial and final validation samples (see Tables 13 and 14).

The presenting characteristics of the 1,821 cases in the final sample are shown in Tables 15 and 16. Keep in mind that this sample was stratified to represent the characteristics of offenders entering supervision in Oregon during 1992. During the first 18 months after admission to probation or parole, approximately 47% of the sample offenders had at least one rap sheet entry for an arrest, violation, or new conviction. Twenty-one percent of the sample offenders were convicted of at least one new felony offense during the follow-up and an additional 8% were convicted of a misdemeanor. An additional 18% of the sample offenders were arrested or violated community supervision but were not convicted of a new offense.

The 21% felony conviction rate is similar to follow-up conviction rates observed in other states where NCCD has completed risk assessment studies. Since Oregon appears to report offender violation and arrest data more systematically on its rap sheets than other jurisdictions, further cross state comparisons are difficult.

The follow-up felony conviction rate for the major sample sub-

TABLE 13

OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
INITIAL AND FINAL*
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS
FOR STATUS, SEX, RACE AND AGE

Sample Characteristics	Initial Sample		Final Sample	
	Cases	Percent	Cases	Percent
Supervision Status:				
Probation	1,380	69%	1,223	67%
Parole	620	31%	598	33%
Sex:				
Male	1,664	83%	1,527	84%
Female	336	17%	294	16%
Race:				
Asian	13	1%	12	1%
African American	181	9%	167	9%
Hispanic	96	5%	84	5%
Native American	34	2%	31	2%
White	1,672	84%	1,523	83%
Other	4	0%	4	0%
Age:				
18 - 27	786	39%	709	39%
28 - 34	559	28%	511	28%

TABLE 14

OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
INITIAL AND FINAL
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS
FOR OFFENSE

Sample Characteristics	Initial Sample		Final Sample	
	Cases	Percent	Cases	Percent
Offense Group:				
A. Assault	149	7.5%	131	7.2%
B. Homicide	32	1.6%	29	1.6%
C. Rape	30	1.5%	30	1.6%
D. Kidnapping	8	0.4%	8	0.4%
E. Robbery	109	5.5%	106	5.8%
F. Sodomy	29	1.5%	27	1.5%
G. Sex Abuse	59	3.0%	54	3.0%
H. Arson	10	0.5%	10	0.5%
I. Burglary	206	10.3%	195	10.7%
J. Forgery	70	3.5%	70	3.8%
K. Theft	198	9.9%	175	9.6%
L. Vehicle Theft	71	3.6%	66	3.6%
M. Driving	315	15.8%	283	15.5%
N. Drugs	406	20.3%	364	20.0%
O. Escape	8	0.4%	8	0.4%
P. Other	201	10.1%	175	9.6%
Unknown	99	5.0%	90	4.9%
TOTAL	**2,000**	**100.0%**	**1,821**	**100.0%**

TABLE 15

OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS
FOR STATUS, SEX, RACE AND AGE

Sample Characteristics	Cases	% Cases	Follow-up Felony Conviction Rate
Supervision Status:			
Probation	1,223	67%	16%
Parole	598	33%	31%
Sex:			
Male	1,527	84%	21%
Female	294	16%	18%
Race:			
Asian	12	1%	25%
African American	167	9%	31%
Hispanic	84	5%	24%
Native American	31	2%	26%
White	1,523	83%	19%
Other/Unknown	4	--	--
Age:			
18 - 27	709	39%	25%
28 - 34	511	28%	21%
35 plus	601	33%	14%
TOTAL	**1,821**	**100%**	**21%**

TABLE 16

OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS
FOR OFFENSE

Sample Characteristics	Cases	% Cases	Follow-up Felony Conviction Rate
Commitment Offense:			
A. Assault	131	7.2%	18%
B. Homicide	29	1.6%	21%
C. Rape	30	1.6%	20%
D. Kidnapping	8	0.4%	25%
E. Robbery	106	5.8%	38%
F. Sodomy	27	1.5%	11%
G. Sex Abuse	54	3.0%	17%
H. Arson	10	0.5%	30%
I. Burglary	195	10.7%	36%
J. Forgery	70	3.8%	26%
K. Theft	175	9.6%	20%
L. Vehicle Theft	66	3.6%	27%

groups is shown in the bold right-hand column of Table 15. Note that the rate for probationers (16%) is nearly half that of parolees (31%), but that gender differences are relatively small -- 21% for males versus 18% for female offenders. There is, however, considerable racial disparity on felony recidivism. The rate for African Americans is significantly higher (31%) than for Whites (19%) and also higher than that observed for Hispanics (24%) or Native Americans (26%). The difference observed here is not unusual. Given our experience in other states, a 10% gross difference between White and African American offenders is about average.

Table 16 shows the commitment offense for sample offenders and the corresponding felony conviction rate. As in most jurisdictions, drug offenders are the largest single group (20%), but have a below average felony recidivism rate (19%). Property offenders, on the other hand, tend to have felony recidivism rates well above the 21% average -- especially if convicted of the more predatory property offenses such as robbery (38%), burglary (36%), arson (30%), or auto theft (27%). The Oregon findings for drug and property offenders are consistent with other NCCD studies.

To supplement the base validation sample, NCCD selected an additional 500 African-American and Hispanic offenders for subgroup analysis of interest to the Advisory Committee. NCCD also requested LEDS for these offenders. Similar to the experience with the base sample, LEDS sheets were actually obtained for 364 of these offenders.

Tables 17 and 18 show the status, sex, age and offense characteristics of these offenders compared with all other offenders in the base sample. The data in these tables show that these subgroup offenders present somewhat different characteristics. Specifically, Table 17 shows that African-American offenders have a greater proportion of parolees while Hispanic offenders have a greater proportion of probationers in the sample than offenders in all other social groups. In addition, Hispanic offenders have a higher proportion of males than do the African-American and all other social groups. Further, the African-American and Hispanic offender subgroups are somewhat older than offenders in the other social groups. Finally, the African-American offenders in the sample had higher proportions committed for violent and drug offenses while the Hispanic offenders had higher proportions committed for driving and drug offenses than offenders in other social groups.

A comparison of African-American and Hispanic offenders with offenders in other social groups in the sample also revealed differences in conviction rates. Table 19 shows that the African-American offenders had higher conviction rates on all three outcome measures, while the Hispanic offenders had higher rates on the felony and combined felony or misdemeanor outcome measures than did the offenders in the other social groups in the sample. Together, these differences in characteristics and outcome measures underscore the importance of examining the performance of the

TABLE 17

OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN,
HISPANIC, AND ALL OTHER OFFENDERS*
FOR STATUS, SEX AND AGE

Sample Characteristics	African American		Hispanic		All Others	
	Cases	Percent	Cases	Percent	Cases	Percent
Supervision Status:						
Probation	191	47%	159	75%	1,081	69%
Parole	213	53%	52	25%	489	31%
Sex:						
Male	331	82%	201	95%	1,314	84%
Female	732	18%	10	5%	256	16%
Age:						
18 - 27	135	34%	85	29%	628	40%
28 - 34	123	30%	65	31%	442	28%
35 plus	146	36%	61	40%	500	32%
TOTAL	**404**	**100%**	**211**	**100%**	**1,570**	**100%**

TABLE 18

OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
COMMITMENT OFFENSE OF AFRICAN AMERICANS,
HISPANICS, AND ALL OTHERS*
FOR OFFENSE

Commitment Offense	African American		Hispanic		All Others	
	Cases	Percent	Cases	Percent	Cases	Percent
A. Violent Offenses	115	28%	23	11%	222	14%
B. Sex Offenses	14	3%	14	6%	99	6%
C. Property Offenses	122	30%	34	16%	441	28%
D. Driving Offenses	9	2%	41	20%	257	17%
E. Drug Offenses	117	29%	64	30%	295	19%
F. Other	30	8%	35	17%	256	16%
TOTAL	**404**	**100%**	**211**	**100%**	**1,570**	**100%**

*Includes over samples of African American and Hispanic offenders.

TABLE 19

OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
FOLLOW-UP CONVICTIONS FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, HISPANICS, AND ALL OTHERS*

Follow-Up Convictions	African American		Hispanic		All Others	
	Cases	Conviction Rate	Cases	Conviction Rate	Cases	Conviction Rate
Misdemeanor or Felony	140	35%	89	42%	436	28%
Felony	129	32%	58	27%	302	19%
Violent Felony	47	12%	8	4%	64	4%
TOTAL	404	100%	211	100%	1,570	100%

*Includes oversample of African American and Hispanic offenders.

current and proposed risk assessment scales for these social subgroups, which is presented later in this report.

D. THE CURRENT INITIAL RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

The risk classification findings for the current risk assessment are shown in Table 20. Offenders classified limited, low, medium, and high had follow-up felony conviction rates of 8%, 13%, 23%, and 34% respectively. Since there is a significant difference in serious (i.e., felony) recidivism as the classification progresses from low to high, we can conclude that the current risk assessment is performing pretty well. High risk offenders, for instance, fail at about four times the rate of low risk offenders. Although this instrument appears to have been constructed for offenders entering parole supervision, it clearly has done an effective job classifying a mixed probation/parole population. Consequently, the current risk assessment items constitute a sound base upon which to develop a revised assessment tool.

E. REVISED INITIAL RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

The criterion NCCD typically employs for revising/improving existing risk assessment tools are as follows:

1. The new instrument should provide better discrimination between low and high risk offenders -- particularly for serious offenses (i.e., new felony conviction or violent felony conviction).

2. Agents in the field should be able to complete the new assessment at least as quickly and reliably as the current one.

TABLE 20

FOLLOW-UP FELONY CONVICTION RATE BY RISK LEVEL: CURRENT INITIAL CLASSIFICATION

Risk Classification	Sample Cases	% Sample	Felony Conviction	
			Cases	Rate
Limited (11)	206	11%	16	8%
Low (9-10)	717	39%	95	13%
Medium (7-8)	380	21%	87	23%
High (0-6)	518	28%	176	34%
TOTAL	**1,821**	**100%**	**374**	**21%**

TABLE 21

FOLLOW-UP FELONY CONVICTION RATE BY RISK LEVEL: REVISED INITIAL CLASSIFICATION

Risk Classification	Sample Cases	% Sample	Felony Conviction	
			Cases	Rate
Very Low (-3 to 0)	555	30%	47	8%
Low (1-5)	714	39%	124	17%
Medium (6-9)	357	20%	119	33%
High (10-18)	195	11%	84	43%
TOTAL	**1,821**	**100%**	**374**	**21%**

3. The assessment scoring procedure should rely on simple offender information that can be easily accessed by and makes intuitive sense to field staff.

Although risk assessment instruments with complicated coding schemes can produce marginally better results in research study presentations, they place a much greater burden on staff to complete and may not prove superior in actual field application because reliable scoring is difficult. A simple classification scheme offers the best guarantee of maintaining instrument performance after implementation.

The revised eight-item risk assessment instrument (Exhibit 1 and 1A) attempts to meet these three criteria by dropping some of the current risk assessment items, maintaining or modifying others, and adding a few new items that are relatively straightforward.

The method employed for selecting the revised items followed procedures described in detail in Gottfredson and Gottfredson (1979), Clear (1988), and Baird(1991). An initial concern in any risk assessment is that items considered for inclusion in a scale be relatively easy for staff to code. This places a premium on simple, straightforward variables which make sense to officers in the field. Predictor variables that were considered included items on the current risk assessment forms plus those found useful in other studies. The procedures employed began with bivariate analyses of potential predictor variables with multiple measures of offender follow-up outcomes. These included felony convictions, violent felony convictions, felony or misdemeanor convictions, and other measures including violations and arrests. These initial

EXHIBIT 1

Revised Oregon Initial Risk Assessment Instrument

R1. Age at admission to probation/parole? (Circle one and enter score) — Score

A.	18 - 27 years	+2
B.	28 - 34 years	0
C.	35 plus	-1

R2. Was the offender felony conviction free in the community for a three year period prior to this supervision? (circle one and enter score)

A.	Yes	0
B.	No	+1

R3. Prior probation, parole, or conditional release violations resulting in a court disposition? (circle one and enter score)

A.	None	-1
B.	One	+2
C.	Two or more	+3

R4. Prior convictions for failure to appear or escape? (circle one and enter score)

A.	None	0
B.	One	+1
C.	Two or more	+3

R5. Convictions for robbery, burglary, or theft? (circle one and enter score)

A.	Robbery	None	0
		One or more	+3
B.	Burglary	None	0
		One	+1
		Two or more	+2
C.	Theft	None	0
		One or more	+1

R6. Convictions for drug offenses? (circle one and enter score)

A.	None	0
B.	One	+1
C.	Two or more	+3

R7. Prior incarcerations? (circle one and enter score)

A.	None	-1
B.	One or two	+1
C.	Three or more	+2

R8. Substance abuse problem in the community during the three years prior to the current offense? (circle one and enter score)

A.	No	0
B.	Yes	+1

TOTAL SCORE _____

EXHIBIT 1A

Revised Initial Risk Assessment Item Coding Instructions

R1. **Age at admission to probation/parole?** Subtract the offender's birth year from the current year.

R2. **Was the offender felony conviction free in the community for a three year period prior to this supervision?** Same definition as in current instrument.

R3. **Prior probation, parole, or conditional release violations resulting in a court disposition?** Based on RAP sheet/DOC records search. Count number of probation/parole or conditional release violations for which there is a court disposition to prison, jail, probation, or fine prior to the date of the risk assessment (count any new convictions for crimes committed while the offender was on probation/parole supervision as a violation regardless of rap sheet evidence). (See ORS codes 135.250, 137.550, 144.350, and 421.120.)

R4. **Prior convictions for failure to appear or escape?** Based on RAP sheet/DOC record search. Count prior convictions for failure to appear or escape (felony or misdemeanor). (See ORS codes 133.050, 133.070, 137.050, 162.145, 162.155, 162.165, 162.775, 162.195, 162.205, 810.360.) Current offense is included in the count.

R5. **Convictions for robbery, burglary, or theft?** Based on RAP sheet/DOC records search. Includes current offense. Count all convictions (felony or misdemeanor) for robbery, burglary, or theft. Arson convictions should be counted in the burglary category. The current conviction offense should be included.

R6. **Convictions for drug offenses?** Based on RAP sheet/DOC records search. Count all drug offenses (delivery, possession, or sale; felony or misdemeanor) including the current offense.

R7. **Prior incarcerations?** Apply same definitions and counting scheme as the current instrument.

R8. **Substance abuse problem in the community during the three years prior to the current offense?** Apply same definition as current instrument.

NOTE: The best way to count prior convictions is simply to add the incidents entered on the RAP sheet or found in correctional records searches. If a single incident references multiple counts or the same offense on the same date, it is counted as "one."

analyses helped identify predictors which have a significant (i.e. .05 one-tail) bivariate relationship with recidivism and provide the initial basis for coding individual variables.

Subsequent analyses were conducted using multivariate techniques to assess which items explained the most variance in the offender outcome measures when evaluated jointly with other predictors. This permits redundant items to be eliminated and establishes the relative weights assigned to variables that have the most predictive power. A variety of statistical methods were used to conduct this part of the analyses. An exhaustive study by Gottfredson and Gottfredson (1979) found that less precise methods of statistical evaluation (including bivariate analyses or least squares regression) produce the best results and those are the procedures that were employed here. Regression analyses were used to identify combinations of predictors which worked well together and to construct preliminary scales. Individual predictors were then re-examined against these preliminary scales to reassess their contribution.

In the final selection and weighting of scale items, variables which proved most useful in the prediction of serious offender behavior (i.e. felony conviction) were given priority. The weights assigned individual items and the cut points of the scale were based on this outcome measure. A complete technical discussion of the methods and findings from the instrument development process is included as Appendix D.

The result is a four-level offender initial risk classification which provides sharper discrimination between high and low rate offenders but reduces the total number of cases classified as high risk. A comparison of the current and revised classification groups, Tables 22 and 23, and is also illustrated in Figures B and C. By incorporating the scale revisions just described, it is possible to identify a very low risk group of 555 offenders with an 8% follow-up felony conviction rate (see Table 21) and a high risk group with a 43% rate. By comparison, the 206 offenders in the current limited classification have an 8% felony conviction rate and offenders classed high risk have a 34% rate. The notable difference here is the distribution of cases among the classifications. The current risk assessment placed 11% of the sample in the lowest risk classification. The revised instrument places 30% in the lowest risk classification.

Follow-up convictions for violent felonies are presented in Tables 22 and 23. Since only 5% of all the sample offenders in Oregon were convicted of a violent felony despite the relatively broad definition employed here, it is more difficult to evaluate the utility of the scales against this outcome measure. Nonetheless, the data indicate that both instruments classify offenders appropriately for violent offenses, but the differentiation of the revised instrument is decidedly sharper (see Figures D and E).

Tables 24 and 25 present a similar comparison of the relative differentiation properties of the current and revised initial risk

TABLE 22

FOLLOW-UP VIOLENT FELONY* CONVICTION RATE BY RISK LEVEL:
CURRENT INITIAL CLASSIFICATION

Risk Classification	Sample Cases	% Sample	Violent Felony Conviction	
			Cases	Rate
Limited	206	11%	5	2.4%
Low	717	39%	13	1.8%
Medium	380	21%	21	5.5%
High	518	28%	51	9.8%
TOTAL	**1,821**	**100%**	**90**	**4.9%**

TABLE 23

FOLLOW-UP VIOLENT FELONY* CONVICTION RATE BY RISK LEVEL:
REVISED INITIAL CLASSIFICATION

Risk Classification	Sample Cases	% Sample	Violent Felony Conviction	
			Cases	Rate
Very Low	555	30%	7	1.3%
Low	714	39%	21	2.9%
Medium	357	20%	37	10.4%
High	195	11%	25	12.8%
TOTAL	**1,821**	**100%**	**90**	**4.9%**

*Includes assault, homicide, rape, kidnapping, robbery, sex abuse, and burglary.

FIGURE B
OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
FOLLOW-UP FELONY CONVICTIONS FOR CURRENT
INITIAL CLASSIFICATION BY RISK LEVEL

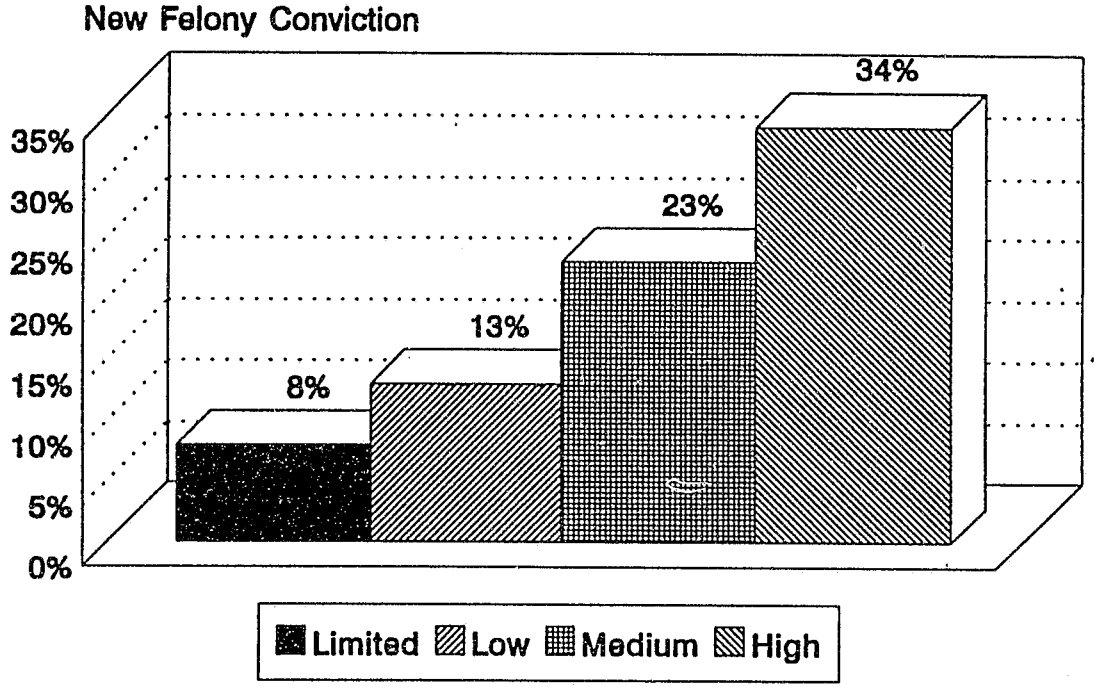

FIGURE C
OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
FOLLOW-UP FELONY CONVICTIONS FOR REVISED INITIAL
CLASSIFICATION BY RISK LEVEL

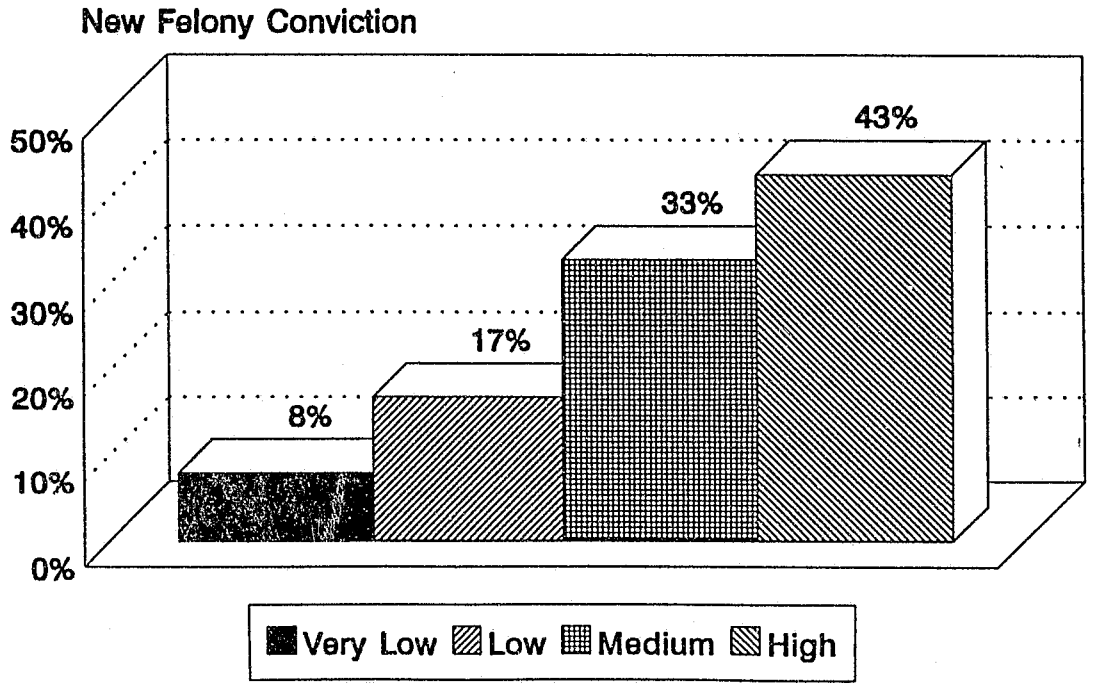

FIGURE D
OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
FOLLOW-UP VIOLENT CONVICTION RATE BY RISK LEVEL
CURRENT INITIAL CLASSIFICATION

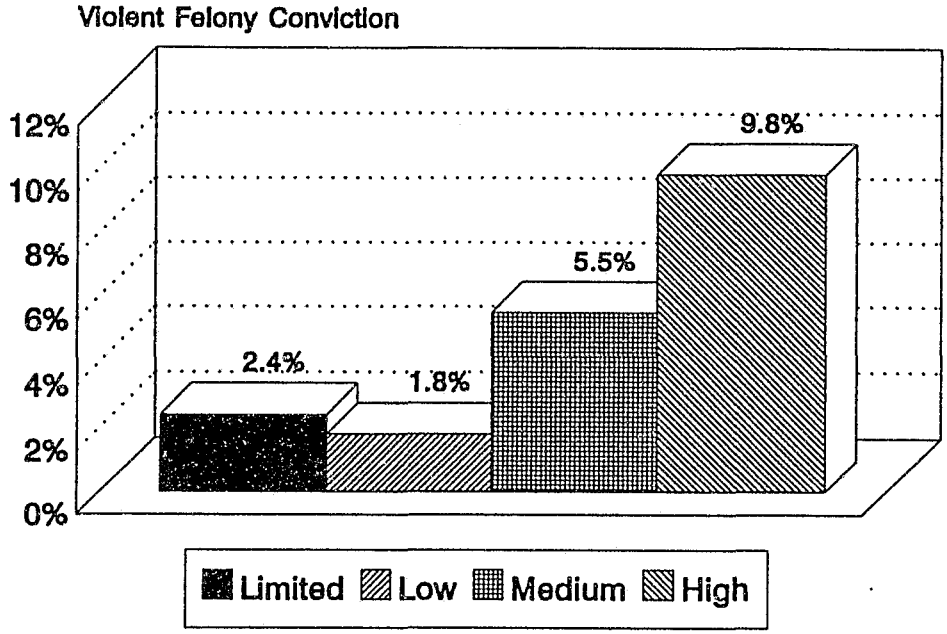

FIGURE E
OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
FOLLOW-UP VIOLENT CONVICTION RATE BY RISK LEVEL
REVISED INITIAL CLASSIFICATION

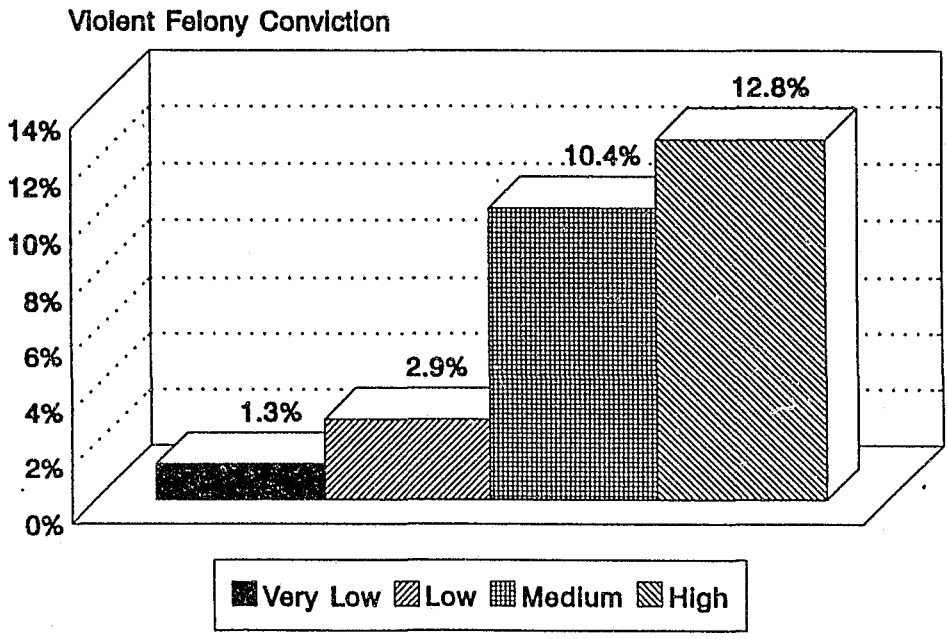

TABLE 24

FOLLOW-UP FELONY OR MISDEMEANOR CONVICTION RATE BY RISK LEVEL: CURRENT INITIAL CLASSIFICATION

Risk Classification	Sample Cases	% Sample	Felony or Misdemeanor Conviction	
			Cases	Rate
Limited	206	11%	30	15%
Low	717	39%	161	22%
Medium	380	21%	119	31%
High	518	28%	218	42%
TOTAL	1,821	100%	528	29%

TABLE 25

FOLLOW-UP FELONY OR MISDEMEANOR CONVICTION RATE BY RISK LEVEL: REVISED INITIAL CLASSIFICATION

Risk Classification	Sample Cases	% Sample	Felony or Misdemeanor Conviction	
			Cases	Rate
Very Low	555	30%	94	17%
Low	714	39%	187	26%
Medium	357	20%	150	42%
High	195	11%	97	50%
TOTAL	1,821	100%	528	29%

assessment scales using a combined outcome measure which includes both felony and misdemeanor convictions. These findings parallel the findings using the other outcome measures with the revised scale showing decidedly better discrimination among the 29 percent of the sample with either felony or misdemeanor convictions during the follow-up period (see also Figures F and G).

Finally, Tables 26 through 33 present comparisons of the relative differentiation properties of the current and revised initial risk assessment scales for various admissions subsamples using felony convictions as the outcome measure. Specifically, Tables 26 through 33 compare the differentiation properties of the two scales for supervision status, sex, race and offense admissions groups. Again, similar to the findings from all previous comparisons, the revised scale shows sharper discrimination for virtually every offender subgroup. It should be noted that comparison between racial groups includes the supplementary or over samples for African-American and Hispanic offenders.

F. CURRENT REASSESSMENT AND OVERRIDE PRACTICE

The Advisory Committee expressed an interest in examining both the offender reclassification patterns and the override practices associated with reassessment. We have attempted to accomplish this task with data available in the OPS.

In fact, NCCD took the first reassessment completed within five months to one year of the initial risk assessment. Of the 1,821 sample cases, 988 had a reassessment available during that

FIGURE F
OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
FOLLOW-UP FELONY OR MISDEMEANOR CONVICTION RATE
CURRENT INITIAL CLASSIFICATION BY RISK LEVEL

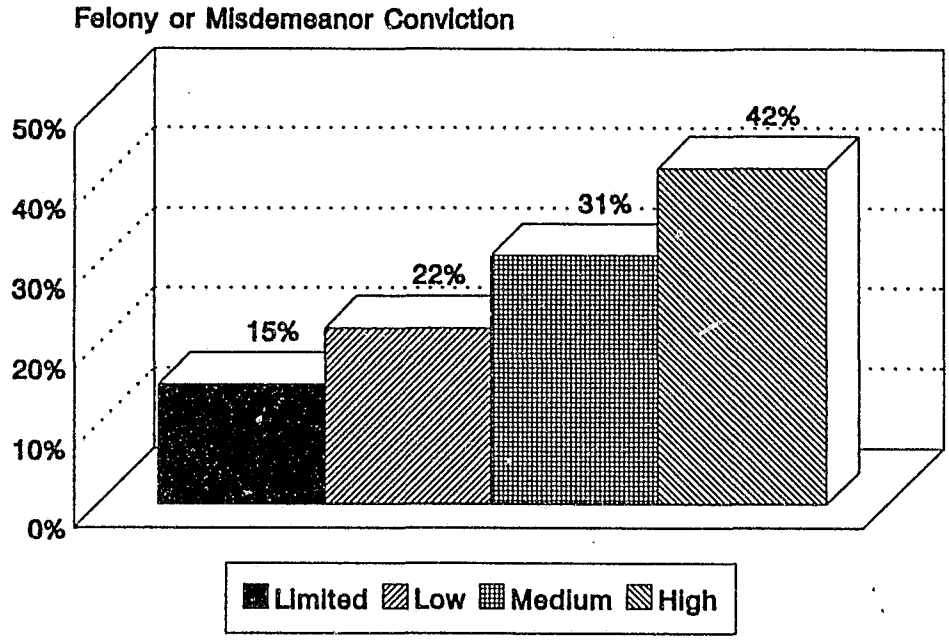

FIGURE G
OREGON RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY
FOLLOW-UP FELONY OR MISDEMEANOR CONVICTION RATE
REVISED INITIAL CLASSIFICATION BY RISK LEVEL

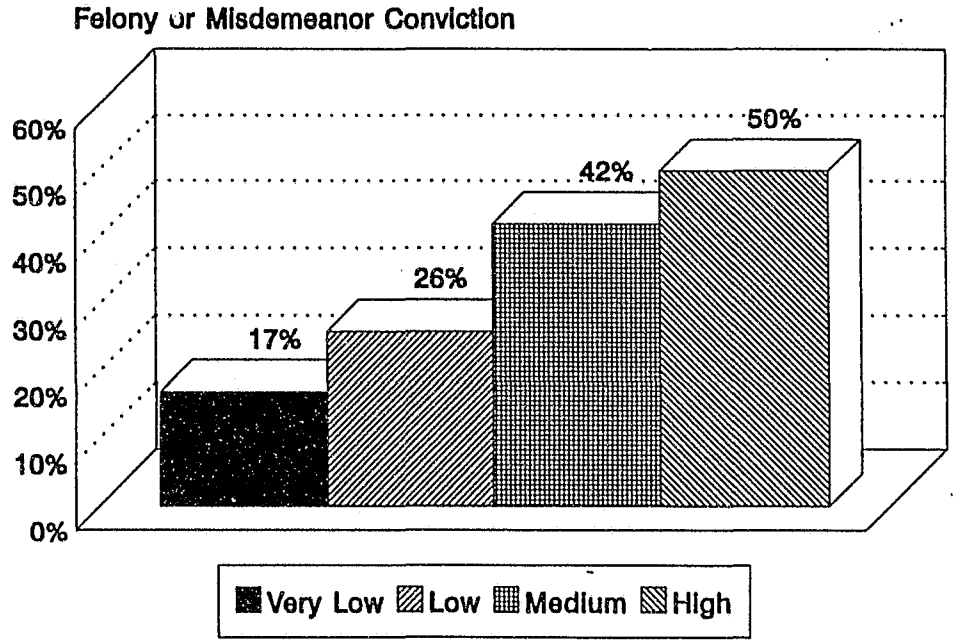

TABLE 26

PROBATION AND PAROLE FELONY CONVICTION RATES:
CURRENT INITIAL CLASSIFICATION BY RISK LEVEL

Risk Classification	Probation			Parole		
	Sample Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Sample Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Limited	192	16%	8%	14	2%	0%
Low	662	54%	13%	55	10%	13%
Medium	253	21%	22%	127	21%	24%
High	116	9%	26%	402	67%	36%
TOTAL	1,223	100%	16%	598	100%	31%

TABLE 27

PROBATION AND PAROLE FELONY CONVICTION RATES:
REVISED INITIAL CLASSIFICATION BY RISK LEVEL

Risk Classification	Probation			Parole		
	Sample Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Sample Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Very Low	518	42%	8%	37	6%	8%
Low	576	47%	18%	138	23%	14%
Medium	119	10%	33%	238	40%	34%
High	10	1%	20%	185	31%	44%
TOTAL	1,223	100%	16%	598	100%	31%

TABLE 28

FELONY CONVICTION RATES BY
OFFENDER SEX:
CURRENT INITIAL CLASSIFICATION BY RISK LEVEL

Risk Classification	Female			Male		
	Sample Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Sample Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Limited	44	15%	7%	162	11%	8%
Low	155	53%	14%	562	37%	13%
Medium	53	18%	30%	327	21%	22%
High	42	14%	29%	476	31%	34%
TOTAL	294	100%	18%	1,527	100%	21%

TABLE 29

FELONY CONVICTION RATES BY
OFFENDER SEX:
REVISED INITIAL CLASSIFICATION BY RISK LEVEL

Risk Classification	Female			Male		
	Sample Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Sample Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Very Low	114	39%	8%	441	29%	9%
Low	127	43%	18%	587	38%	17%
Medium	32	11%	41%	325	21%	33%
High	21	7%	38%	174	11%	44%
TOTAL	294	100%	18%	1,527	100%	21%

TABLE 30

FELONY CONVICTION RATES FOR
AFRICAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC, ALL OTHER*
CURRENT INITIAL CLASSIFICATION BY RISK LEVEL

Risk Classification	African American			Hispanic			All Others		
	Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Limited	32	8%	5%	23	11%	16%	185	12%	8%
Low	112	28%	28%	100	47%	14%	630	40%	12%
Moderate	79	19%	33%	38	18%	40%	332	21%	22%
High	181	45%	39%	50	24%	50%	423	27%	32%
TOTAL	404	100%	32%	211	100%	27%	1,570	100%	19%

TABLE 31

FELONY CONVICTION RATES FOR
AFRICAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC, ALL OTHER*
REVISED INITIAL CLASSIFICATION BY RISK LEVEL

Risk Classification	African American			Hispanic			All Others		
	Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Very Low	74	18%	6%	67	32%	15%	493	31%	8%
Low	136	34%	34%	93	44%	24%	618	39%	15%
Moderate	117	29%	40%	33	16%	43%	299	19%	32%
High	77	19%	40%	18	8%	65%	160	10%	43%
TOTAL	404	100%	32%	211	100%	27%	1,570	100%	19%

*Includes over samples of African American and Hispanic offenders.

TABLE 32

FELONY CONVICTION RATES BY
COMMITMENT OFFENSE GROUP:
CURRENT INITIAL CLASSIFICATION BY RISK LEVEL

Risk Classification	Violent Offense		Sex Offense		Property Offense		Driving Offense		Drug Offense		Other Offense	
	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Limited	10%	4%	29%	11%	7%	9%	10%	13%	7%	12%	19%	2%
Low	29%	16%	31%	3%	24%	19%	59%	8%	52%	17%	46%	9%
Medium	20%	30%	17%	21%	21%	26%	18%	20%	26%	19%	18%	21%
High	41%	36%	23%	35%	48%	37%	13%	33%	15%	30%	17%	21%
TOTAL	100%	26%	100%	16%	100%	28%	100%	14%	100%	19%	100%	12%
CASES	274		111		506		283		364		283	

TABLE 33

FELONY CONVICTION RATES BY
COMMITMENT OFFENSE GROUP:
REVISED INITIAL CLASSIFICATION BY RISK LEVEL

Risk Classification	Violent Offense		Sex Offense		Property Offense		Driving Offense		Drug Offense		Other Offense	
	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Very Low	20%	4%	55%	10%	13%	8%	50%	8%	21%	14%	44%	5%
Low	33%	21%	30%	9%	38%	20%	36%	14%	51%	18%	40%	14%
Medium	22%	30%	9%	50%	31%	36%	12%	39%	18%	28%	11%	26%
High	25%	46%	6%	57%	18%	46%	2%	17%	2%	22%	5%	23%
TOTAL	100%	26%	100%	16%	100%	28%	100%	14%	100%	19%	100%	12%
CASES	274		111		506		283		364		283	

time span. Although some attrition is expected due to new offenses, it seems likely that many cases under supervision during 1990 simply did not have reassessments entered in the OPS. Missing data can, of course, introduce some sample bias but there was no alternative to relying upon available information when examining this issue.

The reassessment process actually begins at the initial risk assessment where officers can override the initial classification for a variety of reasons. There are few states, for instance, that do not override assaultive offenders or sex offenders initially classified as low risk to higher levels of supervision as a matter of policy. After these mandatory overrides, others are often permitted based on offender needs, officer discretion, and other factors.

At the reassessment, which is typically scheduled to occur about six months after the initial risk classification, offender behavior on supervision and the officer's assessment of it are usually given more weight in the classification process. This is true in the current Oregon system which begins to look at factors such as offender employment, substance use, address changes, and compliance with the conditions of supervision during the previous few months. The new classification is derived by an instrument which weights these factors plus selected items on the initial risk assessment instrument. The result is a risk reclassification which balances recent offender behavior and the most important elements of the offender's initial risk profile. This reassessment

classification is also subject to overrides for offense type, offender needs, compliance, or officer discretion. The level at which an offender is actually supervised is the end result of both the reassessment and the override. The current Oregon reassessment, like other jurisdictions, relies heavily on officer observation and assessment.

Table 34 shows the classification of sample reassessed cases at initial assessment, the first reassessment, and the reassessment after the override.

As the first two columns of Table 34 indicate, there are limited differences between the classification distribution based on the reassessment score and that based on both the score and the override. Our analyses suggests that only 84 (9%) cases were overridden to a higher level of supervision than the reassessment score specified and that 62 (6%) were placed in a lower level. Reasons most frequently given for overrides to higher levels were: assaultive/sex offender (55%), officer discretion (19%), offender needs (13%), and new criminal activity (11%). Reasons for the 64 overrides to a lower classification level were most likely to be officer discretion (29%), offender in custody (24%), or conformance to conditions (11%).

The available evidence suggests that officers are not overriding very many cases after completing the current reassessment. When they do override, moves to higher and lower levels tend to cancel one another out. One possible reason for

TABLE 34

CLASSIFICATION OF RISK REASSESSMENT SAMPLE CASES:

BEFORE OVERRIDE, AFTER OVERRIDE, AND AT INITIAL ASSESSMENT

(N = 988)

Risk Classification	Reassessment Score	Reassessment after Override	Initial Assessment Score
Limited	36%	39%	12%
Low	27%	22%	43%
Medium	19%	23%	20%
High	18%	16%	25%
TOTAL	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

this is that officers have a great deal of input into the reassessment instrument, i.e., they have already experienced an opportunity to influence classification by scoring offender behavior before exercising a case override.

The far right-hand column of Table 34 shows the initial risk classification (without override) of the 988 cases for whom reassessment/override data are available. It is clear that the end result of the current reassessment is to move sample offenders to lower levels of supervision than were specified at the initial assessment. This is apparent in the limited risk classification which grows from 12% at the initial assessment to 39% at the reassessment after override.

G. REVISED RISK REASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Exhibit 2, which follows presents a recommendation for a revised risk reassessment instrument. Since NCCD's findings indicate that the current reassessment instrument is performing well, the revised format is very similar to the old one and four of the seven items are the same (R7, RA8, RA9, and RA10). The major alterations involved dropping the address change item and adding more specific items for prior offense history. Tables 35 through 38 that follow compare conviction rates observed after the first available reassessment for the current and revised reassessment scales. Sample bias introduced by missing reassessment records probably make these data much less reliable than those used for the initial risk assessment, but the tables provide the best available

EXHIBIT 2
Revised Oregon Risk Reassessment Instrument

Score

R2. Prior probation, parole, or conditional release violations resulting in a court disposition? (circle one and enter score)

A.	None	-1
B.	One or more	+2

R5. Convictions for robbery, burglary, or theft? (circle one and enter score)

A.	Robbery	None	0
		One or more	+2
B.	Burglary	None	0
		One or more	+1
C.	Theft	None	0
		One or more	+1

R6. Convictions for drug offenses? (circle one and enter score)

A.	None	0
B.	One	+1
C.	Two or more	+3

R7. Number of prior incarcerations? (circle one and enter score)

A.	None	-1
B.	One or two	+1
C.	Three or more	+2

Offender Behavior Since the Last Assessment

RA8. Substance abuse problem in the community ? (circle one and enter score)

A.	No use/possession	0
B.	Occasional use	+1
C.	Frequent abuse	+2

RA9. Response to conditions of supervision ? (circle one and enter score)

A.	No problems	-1
B.	Some problems	+1
C.	Unwilling to comply	+3

RA10. Verified Employment ? (circle one and enter score)

A.	76-100%	-1
B.	40-75%	0
C.	0-39%	+2

TOTAL SCORE ____

TABLE 35

FOLLOW-UP FELONY CONVICTION RATE:

CURRENT REASSESSMENT BY RISK LEVEL

Risk Classification	Sample Cases	% Sample	Felony Conviction	
			Cases	Rate
Limited (11-12)	360	36%	31	9%
Low (9-10)	263	27%	44	17%
Medium (7-8)	192	19%	59	31%
High (0-6)	173	18%	75	43%
TOTAL	988	100%	209	21%

TABLE 36

FOLLOW-UP FELONY CONVICTION RATE:

REVISED REASSESSMENT BY RISK LEVEL

Risk Classification	Sample Cases	% Sample	Felony Conviction	
			Cases	Rate
Very Low (-4 to -1)	358	36%	26	7%
Low (0 to 3)	316	32%	53	17%
Medium (4 to 6)	159	16%	65	35%
High (7 to 16)	154	16%	75	48%
TOTAL	988	100%	209	21%

TABLE 37 FOLLOW-UP VIOLENT FELONY CONVICTION RATE: CURRENT REASSESSMENT BY RISK LEVEL				
Risk Classification	Sample Cases	% Sample	Violent Felony Conviction	
			Cases	Rate
Limited	360	36%	4	1.1%
Low	263	27%	5	1.9%
Medium	192	19%	10	5.2%
High	173	18%	16	9.2%
TOTAL	988	100%	35	3.5%

TABLE 38 FOLLOW-UP VIOLENT FELONY CONVICTION RATE: REVISED REASSESSMENT BY RISK LEVEL				
Risk Classification	Sample Cases	% Sample	Violent Felony Conviction	
			Cases	Rate
Very Low	358	36%	2	0.6%
Low	316	32%	8	2.5%
Medium	159	16%	7	4.4%
High	154	16%	18	11.6%
TOTAL	988	100%	35	3.5%

estimate of how the current and proposed reassessment perform.

The Table 36 findings suggest that the current risk reassessment instrument is working well. Offenders classified as limited risk have a felony conviction rate of 9% versus 43% in the high risk group. Recent offender behavior items (employment, response to conditions, and substance abuse) proved to be particularly good predictors and the current instrument clearly provides a strong base upon which to develop a new reassessment. The revised reassessment provides a somewhat sharper discrimination of the felony conviction rate at the highest (48% versus 43%) and lowest (7% versus 9%) classifications. Tables 36 and 37 compare violent felony rates for the two scales which also demonstrate sharper definition in the revised reassessment.

The distribution of cases among risk levels appears to be only slightly altered by the new reassessment -- about 5% of the offender are moved from medium and high risk to low. In short, the new reassessment offers some discrimination advantages over the current one but is not likely to alter the distribution of cases among risk classifications a great deal.

IV. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1: <u>The ORDOC should adopt the revised initial risk assessment and reassessment scales developed by NCCD.</u>

While NCCD strongly encourages this course of action, it is clearly recognized that to do so will require a significant implementation effort on the part of CSB personnel. Therefore, this important decision should be based on a careful assessment of the relative advantages and disadvantages of adopting the revised RAS versus maintaining the current system. The following represents a summary and analysis of the critical factors that should be considered in making this decision including the projected impact of the revised RAS on CSB workload.

A. ADVANTAGES OF ADOPTING THE REVISED RISK ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

1. Provides more efficient discrimination of future recidivism than the current assessment. At both the initial assessment and reassessment, the revised instruments identify risk groups which are more sharply defined. Compared to the current assessments, there is a smaller group of high risk offenders who have a higher recidivism rate and a larger group of low risk offenders who fail at about the same rate.
2. Places a much larger proportion of cases in the limited and low risk classifications at the initial assessment before overrides are exercised. This could conserve a

staff time which could be redeployed to raise the contact standard for medium or high risk cases and override all violent/sex offenders to high risk.

3. Spreads out risk groups better and should provide more reliable classifications. For instance, the current limited classification score is 11 points only, low is 7-8, and medium 9-10 points. Consequently, relatively small coding errors can cause a big change in classification. The score ranges are spread out much better by the revised instruments, i.e., very low is -3 to 0 points, low is 1 to 5 points, etc. This tolerates more error and provides a better base for revising the classifications later on if workload demands change.
4. Using explicit offense conviction types rather than a generic prior felony item provides the officer with a more meaningful description of the offender's past criminal behavior.
5. The coding scheme and item definitions are more straightforward and much easier to score accurately as well as understand.

B. DISADVANTAGES OF ADOPTION

The best argument against adoption of the revised risk assessment format is the time and expense of retraining staff, redrafting forms, and altering the MIS. The current classification system is adequate in its current form, but will not deploy agency

resources as efficiently as the revised instruments. To some degree, the decision should be based on workload demand, especially the ability of officers to meet the current contact standard for high and medium risk offenders.

RECOMMENDATION #2: <u>The CSB should pilot test the revised RAS before statewide implementation.</u>

No matter how carefully a risk assessment system has been designed, experience has shown that pilot testing very often reveals unanticipated problems and/or issues (e.g unclear or incomplete scoring instructions). These can be usually be addressed with limited time and effort if they are detected before statewide implementation. It is therefore prudent to undertake a limited field testing process which can be restricted to a few officers and offices and completed in a relatively short period of time (e.g. 1 month). The results of the testing process should be compiled and reviewed by an appropriate CSB advisory committee (e.g. OCMS) whose responsibility it will be to determine any modifications that are warranted. At a minimum, pilot test procedures should produce documented information regarding :1) the availability of required information; 2) the accuracy achieved in applying the system; and 3) the impact the revised system has on actual classification decisions by comparing the results with those obtained under the current system.

RECOMMENDATION #3: The CSB should develop an effective strategy for communicating the results of the validation study to all management and line staff as well as state oversight officials.

The validation study has produced the first empirical evidence of the performance of the current RAS. Despite the observed problems with reliability, these results have clearly indicated that the current system has performed rather well as a classification system. These results are inconsistent with prevailing staff perceptions regarding its effectiveness. Communicating these results should enhance the credibility of CSB management among line staff.

The validation study has also produced empirical evidence on how the revised RAS that NCCD has proposed could actually improve performance and make the system easier to use and understand for both line staff and management (e.g. easier to score, easier to adjust cut-off scores). Communicating the public safety, workload and utility advantages of the revised RAS should garner added support for its implementation among CSB staff and enhance CSB credibility with its oversight officials.

RECOMMENDATION #4: The ORDOC should improve procedures for insuring the accuracy and completeness of its RAS database.

The ORDOC has designed an RAS database as part of its computerized OPS which is essential for effective monitoring of its application and proved very valuable in facilitating this validation study. However, the data collection process used for the

validation study revealed important deficiencies in how the database had been implemented which reduces the actual benefits it was designed to provide. Specifically, database documentation was found to be incomplete, out of date or even nonexistent in some instances. In addition, NCCD analysis revealed that their were substantial proportions of CSB offenders without complete RAS data. The ORDOC should identify and implement quality control procedures and safeguards to insure the integrity of this valuable information resource.

RECOMMENDATION #5: In cooperation with the Oregon State Police, the ORDOC should develop a standardized and streamlined approach for requesting LEDS data.

Obtaining crime history records was critical to the conduct of this validation study and will be needed in most efforts to conduct various program evaluations in the future. NCCD's experience with obtaining LEDS data for this study revealed a very cumbersome and protracted process which resulted in substantial delays in project activities dependent on this information. However, this experience also uncovered an alternative more direct process which resulted in obtaining the LEDS more quickly and easily. An interoffice memo describing this process is included as Appendix E to this report. This or a similar procedure should be standardized and agreed to by both the ORDOC and the State Police.

RECOMMENDATION #6: The ORDOC should consider collecting information regarding offender stability measures such as alcohol/drug abuse and employment history as part of its OPS database.

Any effort to revise an existing risk assessment instrument is limited by the availability of systematically observed data describing offender behavior or characteristics at the time field supervision begins. This study has access to the current risk assessment items, MIS demographic information, and prior criminal or supervision history drawn from LEDS searches. Although LEDS searches expanded the information about offenders considerably, there are a few critical measures of offender stability, typically available in jurisdictions using the standard NIC initial risk assessment, which are not systematically recorded in Oregon. These include separate assessments of alcohol and drug abuse and an evaluation of recent offender employment history. NCCD believes that making these assessments will prove useful in future risk assessment and program evaluation efforts in Oregon. When current assessment procedures are revised, the possibility of adding these items to the assessment/reassessment forms should be considered.

V. SUMMARY

This section summarizes the findings from the validation study as they relate to each of the specific research questions established for it.

1. What are the established goals for the RAS in Oregon?

   According to official ORDOC documents the primary goals of the RAS are to: 1) classify offenders based on risk of recidivism which is defined as the likelihood of new criminal behavior; 2) manage offenders using the least restrictive method; and 3) insure statewide consistency in the classification and management of offenders.

2. Does the design of the RAS make sense in light of these goals?

   The design of the current RAS which uses separate initial assessment and reassessment scales and the specific criteria they employ appears consistent with the stated goals of classification.

3. How does the Oregon RAS compare to similar systems which have been empirically validated in other jurisdictions? What evidence do these comparisons provide regarding the likelihood that the Oregon system will achieve the goals for which it was designed?

A cross-jurisdictional comparison of the RAS with similar classification systems from nine other jurisdictions which conducted empirical validations, produced very favorable results. Many of the RAS criteria are common to most other systems which is significant support for the face validity of the current system. However, the comparison also revealed important differences between the RAS and other systems involving variations in the coding of specific criteria or the omission of several criteria common to other systems. These differences suggested a direction for design modifications which NCCD used to examine ways to improve the performance of the current system.

4. What is the level of accuracy and consistently with which line staff are able to apply the risk assessment scales?

The results of an interrater reliability study revealed significant levels of scoring errors on individual RAS criteria. This lack of reliability was largely attributed to problems with the RAS scoring instructions which were found to be overly complex for certain criteria and unclear or incomplete for other criteria. The impact of these scoring errors was mitigated, however, by the relatively high rates of correct supervision level assignments which occurred in spite of these problems.

5. What are the perceptions and experiences of CSB staff regarding the RAS in Oregon?

The results of a statewide survey of CSB staff showed mixed results on the issues of the design and implementation of the RAS. Specifically, CSB staff offered about as many positive opinions as negative ones in these areas. However, the pattern of responses was very different regarding the impact of the RAS with the vast majority of CSB staff offering negative opinions on most aspects of the system's effect on probation and parole operations. It seems likely that these negative perceptions stem from both the utility problems line staff have with the current RAS as well as the previous lack of empirical evidence regarding its actual performance.

6. How well does the current RAS separate groups of offenders based on rates of success/failure and what steps can be taken to improve its performance in this area?

Based on the follow-up study of over 2,100 offenders, the results show that the current initial assessment and reassessment scales have achieved a good level of discrimination among these offenders on all three of the conviction outcome measures used in the validation study (i.e. felony, violent felony, combined misdemeanor and felony convictions). NCCD's analysis also showed that applying revised scales which dropped some of the current items,

maintained others, and added a few new items that are very straightforward, can significantly improve the performance of the system in separating offenders based on the same outcome measures. This is significant as the purpose of all risk assessment systems should be to separate groups of offenders to the maximum extent possible based on rates of success/failure.

7. How well does the current RAS achieve the principle of using the least restrictive method for offender management? Can the performance of the RAS be improved in this area?

The results of the validation study showed that the current RAS approached but did not fully achieve the least restrictive principle. The results of the study showed that the current initial assessment and reassessment scales classified a large proportion of offenders (50% and 63% respectively) with decidedly lower conviction rates to the lowest levels of supervision (i.e. limited and low levels). However, NCCD's analysis of its proposed initial assessment and reassessment scales showed that these revised instruments could increase the proportion of offenders in these lower levels (to 69% and 68% respectively) while maintaining, and in some cases actually decreasing, the conviction rates for these groups of offenders. This is extremely important as these results indicate that the ORDOC can significantly reduce CSB supervision workload (estimated by NCCD at 80 to 90 FTE's) by

adopting the revised RAS proposed by NCCD and do so without compromising public safety.

8. How well has the current system performed with specific types of offenders such as sex, race and offense subgroups. Can the system's performance be improved with these groups of offenders?

The validation study has produced results for offender subgroups which are similar to the overall results regarding the relative differentiation properties of the current and revised initial risk assessment scales. Specifically, the results show that the current scale performs well in separating various types of offenders based on follow-up felony conviction rates, however, the revised scale provides sharper discrimination for virtually every sex, race and offense subgroup examined in the study.

9. What has been the extent, direction and impact of the use of officer discretion in applying the RAS?

The results from the study showed that officers used their discretion to override the reassessment score in a limited number of cases (15%) which was within the range (5% to 15%) that NCCD considers acceptable for this type of classification system. In addition, the study found that officers used their discretion to override to a higher or a lower level in about

the same number of instances. This meant the overall classification distribution determined directly by the reassessment scale was changed very little as a result of the discretionary use of overrides by CSB officers.

10. What has been the extent and direction of the movement of offenders between supervision levels brought about by the application of the RAS?

The results of the validation study indicated that a significant proportion of offenders moved to lower supervision levels as the result of reassessment compared to the levels specified for them at initial risk assessment (e.g. limited supervision rose from 12% to 39% for offenders in the sample). This is significant, since a pattern of downward movement provides a means of reducing the supervision workload of the CSB for offenders who are performing well under supervision.

11. Are there specific ways the ORDOC can improve the performance and impact of the RAS by making changes in its design or implementation?

The CSB should adopt the revised RAS proposed by NCCD since its design provides some clear advantages over the current system including: 1) better discrimination of offenders on success/failure measures; 2) reduced workload by more fully achieving the least restrictive principle regarding the method

of supervision; 3) easier and more accurate scoring procedures for line staff; 4) easier to understand as higher scores are related to higher risk and vice versa; and 5) an expanded scoring range which is easier to adjust in response to future changes in workload, population characteristics and resource levels. The CSB can facilitate implementation of the new system by pilot testing the revised RAS to refine its design and procedures as well as communicating the results of the validation study itself to elicit understanding and support for the new system among line staff.

12. How can validation research be facilitated in the future and what issues should be addressed?

The CSB can facilitate the conduct of validation research in the future by implementing procedures for insuring the accuracy and completeness of its RAS database and by working cooperatively with the State Police to develop a streamlined procedure for obtaining Law Enforcement Data Sheets.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Oregon was one of literally hundreds of community corrections agencies which implemented risk assessment based classification systems in the 1980's. Also like the vast majority of these agencies, the CSB in Oregon decided to adapt a risk assessment instrument developed for another purpose or population rather than to empirically construct a new instrument uniquely designed for its offender population. While this course was defensible based on expedience and the universal quality of risk instruments, it left agencies like the CSB with no objective information to demonstrate that this adapted system actually performed properly with their own population.

To overcome this important deficiency, it was recommended that these agencies validate their systems after a period in which they garnered sufficient experience and data to conduct such research. Unfortunately, lack of commitment, resources, expertise and changing priorities have served as some of the obstacles to validation in all too many agencies. As a result, many agencies are operating with classification systems that lack credibility, or at worst, are actually ineffective in managing offenders and resources.

Unlike these agencies, the CSB sustained its commitment to insuring an effective classification system by conducting the comprehensive validation research presented in this report. This is especially fortunate since the results of this research are very

favorable and if properly utilized can produce important benefits for the CSB. Specifically, this research has clearly shown that the current risk assessment system has performed well despite some documented problems of reliability, utility and credibility. The research has also provided a proposed model for a revised system that can significantly improve classification decision making and assuage all of the problems inherent in the current system. By so doing, Oregon will join the small but elite group of community corrections agencies who have implemented a second generation of classification systems that are demonstrably more effective as an offender and agency management system in the contemporary community corrections environment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CURRENT INITIAL AND RISK REASSESSMENT SCALES

ttachment 1

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
Community Services

INITIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

___ISP Case

Final Supervision Level
___High ___Medium
___Low ___Limited

AME: SID #: COUNTY:

A. How many prior felony convictions?
No convictions _____ 3
1 conviction _____ 2
2-3 convictions _____ 1
4 or more convictions _____ 0

B. How many prior incarcerations (executed sentences of 90 days or more, felony or misdemeanor, adult or juvenile)?
No incarcerations _____ 2
1-2 incarcerations _____ 1
3 or more incarcerations _____ 0

C. Was the offender felony conviction-free (verified) for a period of three years in the community prior to the present supervision?
Yes _____ 1
No _____ 0

D. What was the age of the offender at the start of the behavior leading to this supervision?
Age 26+ and total ABC score > 0 ____ 2
Age 26+ and total ABC score = 0 ____ 1
Age 21-26 and total ABC score > 0 ____ 1
Age 21-26 and total ABC score = 0 ____ 0
Age is under 21 _____ 0

E. Does present supervision include violations of:
1. Probation, Release Agreement, Failure to Appear?
2. Parole, Escape, Custody Violation?

If the answer to both 1 & 2 is NO ____ 2
If 1 is YES and 2 is NO _____ 1
If 2 is Yes _____ 0

F. Were there admitted or documented substance abuse problems in the community during the 3 year period immediately prior to the commission of the crime of conviction?
No _____ 1
Yes _____ 0

TOTAL SCORE: _____

Data	
#Priors:	____
#Priors:	____
	Y / N
Age:	____
	1. Y/N
	2. Y/N
	Y / N

Override Request

Categories	*Information Source(s)*
Level Increase	
___Assault Offender	___Official Documents
___Sex Offender	
___Offender Needs	___Offender Statements
___Extreme Criminal Conduct	
___New Criminal Activity	___Law Enforcement
___Major Non-Conformance	
___Associations	___Clinical Testing
Level Increase/Decrease	
___Officer Discretion	___Needs Assessment
Level Decrease	
___Conformance to Conditions	___Collateral Sources
___In Custody	
___Unavailable	

Justification

Scored Level: ___High ___Medium ___Low ___Limited

☐Override/☐Policy Level: ___High ___Medium ___Low ___Limited

REMOVE OVERRIDE ☐

OFFICER:_____ DATE:_____

JPERVISOR:_____

DATE:_____ ☐Accept ☐ Reject

Canary: Data Entry CD1140F (9/90)

achment 2

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
Community Services

RISK REASSESSMENT

___ISP Case

Final Supervision Level
___High ___Medium
___Low ___Limited

NAME: SID #: COUNTY:

		Data
A. How many prior felony convictions?		#Priors:
0-1 conviction	2	
2-3 convictions	1	
4 or more convictions	0	___
B. How many prior incarcerations (executed sentences of 90 days or more, felony or misdemeanor, adult or juvenile)?		#Priors:
No incarcerations	2	
1-2 incarcerations	1	
3 or more incarcerations	0	___
C. Does present supervision include parole, probation, failure to appear, release agreement, escape or custody violation?		Y / N
No	1	
Yes	0	
RATE THE FOLLOWING BASED UPON THE OFFENDER'S PERFORMANCE SINCE THE LAST ASSESSMENT		
D. Substance abuse problems:		
No use/possession of illegal substances or alcohol abuse	2	
Occasional abuse; some disruption of functioning	1	
Frequent abuse; serious disruption of functioning; failure to comply with treatment	0	
E. Response to conditions of supervision:		
No problems of consequence	2	
Some problems of consequence	1	
Has been unwilling to comply	0	
F. Verified employment:		%___
60-100%	2	
40-59%	1	
0-39%	0	
(If N/A, enter 101% into Data Box)		
G. Number of address changes:		#___
0-1	1	
2 or more	0	
TOTAL SCORE:	___	

Override Request

Categories	*Information Source(s)*
Level Increase	
___Assault Offender	___Official Documents
___Sex Offender	
___Offender Needs	___Offender Statements
___Extreme Criminal Conduct	
___New Criminal Activity	___Law Enforcement
___Major Non-Conformance	
___Associations	___Clinical Testing
Level Increase/Decrease	
___Officer Discretion	___Needs Assessment
Level Decrease	
___Conformance to Conditions	___Collateral Sources
___In Custody	
___Unavailable	

Justification

Scored Level: ___High ___Medium ___Low ___Limited

☐Override/☐Policy Level: ___High ___Medium ___Low ___Limited

REMOVE OVERRIDE ☐

OFFICER:_____ DATE:_____

SUPERVISOR:_____

DATE:_____ ☐ Accept ☐ Reject

White: File Canary: Data Entry CD1140aF (9/90)

APPENDIX B

CSB STAFF SURVEY FORM AND RESPONSES

QUESTIONS FOR CSB STAFF SURVEY
REGARDING THE RISK ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain your opinions and experience regarding the OCMS Risk Assessment System. Your comments and those of all other probation and parole officers, supervisors and administrators will be anonymous and will be used only for selecting ways to improve its performance. The questions are divided into three categories of issues which are: 1) Design Issues — how well has the system been constructed (e.g., criteria, weights, etc.); 2) Implementation Issues — how well has the system been put into operation (e.g., training, documentation, etc.); and 3) Impact Issues — what effect has the system had on probation and parole operations (e.g., public safety, officer effectiveness, etc.)

In completing the survey, please read each statement carefully and then circle the one number for the response that most closely describes the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Please be sure to respond to all of the statements. After you have completed the questionnaire please return it to the OCMS Specialist in your office. Results of the survey will be distributed by the OCMS Advisory Committee at the completion of the study.

CSB Office (Use Code): Total Respondents = 250

Job Classification (circle one): Officer 87.1% (202) Supervisor 6.9% (16)
Manager 5.6% (13) Administrator 6.4% (1) Unk = 18

Length of Time Employed in CSB: Years 10.3 Months

Type of Caseload: Intake 5.2% (12) Casebank 14.0% (32) General 52.8% (121)
ISP 2.2% (5) Sex Offender 10.0% (23) Red Tag 3.9% (9)
N/A 11.8% (27) Unk = 21

Design Issues

\+ 1. The questions on the initial risk assessment scale are the kind that I would personally ask to assess the risk of recidivism.

No = 3

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
12.1% (30)	59.1% (146)	23.9% (59)	4.9% (12)
	71.2%		

– 2. The weighting of the questions on the initial risk assessment scale do not appropriately reflect their importance to the overall classification decision.

No = 5

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
15.1% (37)	43.7% (107)	35.9% (88)	5.3% (13)
58.8%			

+ 3. Reclassification at least every six (6) months is appropriate in most cases.

No = 1

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
27.3% (68)	53.0% (132)	13.7% (34)	6.0% (15)
80.3%			

– 4. The risk assessment system is difficult to score.

No = 2

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
10.1% (25)	28.2% (70)	37.5% (93)	24.2% (60)
		61.7%	

– 5. The questions on the risk reassessment scale are not the kind that I would personally ask to assess risk of recidivism.

No = 4

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
9.3% (23)	41.9% (103)	39.4% (97)	9.3% (23)
51.2%			

+ 6. The weighing of the questions on the risk reassessment scale appropriately reflect their importance to the overall classification decision.

No = 4

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
4.1% (10)	44.7% (110)	40.7% (100)	10.6% (25)
		51.3%	

– 7. The risk assessment system does not take into consideration my professional judgement.

No = 1

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
23.3% (58)	34.5% (86)	29.7% (74)	12.4% (31)
57.8%			

\+ 8. We need both scales (initial risk assessment and reassessment) to effectively classify offenders for ongoing supervision.

No = 3

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
18.6% (46)	49.8% (123)	20.2% (50)	11.3% (28)
68.4%			

\+ 9. Overall, the risk assessment system does a good job of predicting an offender's likelihood of committing new criminal acts.

No = 4

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
3.3% (8)	33.7% (83)	39.8% (98)	23.2% (57)
		63.1%	

\+ 10. The risk <u>reassessment</u> instrument is a good balance between historical information and recent behavior information.

N = 1

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
4.4% (11)	55.4% (138)	29.3% (73)	10.8% (27)
59.8%			

\- 11. We need supplementary (e.g., specialized) risk assessment instruments for certain offender subgroups (e.g., sex offenders, drug offenders) in order to classify them more effectively.

No = 1

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
39.8% (99)	39.4% (98)	11.2% (28)	9.6% (24)
79.2%			

\+ 12. The override feature allows me adequate opportunity to use my professional judgement to adjust the supervision level.

No = 0

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
30.4% (76)	51.6% (129)	13.2% (33)	4.8% (12)
82.0%			

\+ 13. The override categories adequately describe the basic areas or factors not always accounted for by the risk assessment questions.

No = 1

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
19.3% (48)	63.5% (158)	14.5% (36)	2.8% (7)
82.8%			

Implementation Issues

\+ 14. The policies and procedures governing the system are clear and complete.

No = 4

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
4.5% (11)	34.1% (84)	43.1% (106)	18.3% (45)
		61.4%	

— 15. The process for assessing risk varies between CSB offices.

No = 16

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
20.5% (48)	59.8% (140)	17.1% (40)	2.6% (6)
80.3%			

— 16. I do not know how the risk assessment system was developed.

No = 5

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
11.8% (29)	27.8% (68)	38.8% (95)	21.6% (53)
		60.4%	

17. The offenders themselves should be directly involved in the risk assessment process.

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
3.6% (9)	14.4% (36)	25.2% (63)	56.8% (142)
		82.0%	

— 18. I have never seen examples of how the department uses the information from the risk assessment system in the offender profile data base.

No = 7

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
27.6% (67)	31.3% (76)	26.7% (65)	14.4% (35)
58.9%			

+ 19. Based on risk assessment/reassessment scores, offenders are placed in the appropriate supervision level most of the time (80-90 percent).

No = 4

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
5.7% (14)	44.7% (110)	32.1% (79)	17.5% (43)
50.4%		49.6%	

— 20. I believe that some officers may use the override feature to inappropriately change the supervision level in too many cases.

No = 8

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
12.0% (29)	31.0% (75)	41.3% (100)	15.7% (38)
		57.0%	

— 21. I have not received enough training to accurately complete the risk assessment process.

No = 3

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
4.5% (11)	17.0% (42)	33.6% (83)	44.9% (111)
		78.5%	

+ 22. Supervision level assignments are being made in a fair and consistent manner.

No = 4

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
6.5% (16)	44.7% (110)	37.4% (92)	11.4% (28)
51.2%		48.8%	

\+ 23. The information obtained by the departments' administration from the risk assessment system is accurate.

No = 16

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
1.7% (4)	36.8% (86)	47.9% (112)	13.7% (32)
		61.6%	

\+ 24. The information obtained from the risk assessment system is used regularly by department administration.

No = 28

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
14.0% (31)	53.6% (119)	27.0% (60)	5.4% (12)
67.6%			

— 25. I have not always been notified of changes in the risk assessment system.

No = 8

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
7.4% (18)	33.9% (82)	42.1% (102)	16.5% (40)
41.3%		58.6%	

\+ 26. I am confident that the risk assessment and reassessment data are entered on the OCMS data base in a timely and accurate manner.

No = 11

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
15.5% (37)	51.0% (122)	25.1% (60)	8.4% (20)
66.5%			

27. The following factors are those most often identified as interfering with the proper implementation of a risk assessment system. Based on your own experience with the OCMS Risk Assessment System, please rate the factors in terms of their negative impact using the following scale:

Not Significant		Moderately Significant		Highly Significant
1	2	3	4	5

Rating

— A. Lack of prior record information

2.9% (7) 6.6% (16) 21.0% (51) **22.6% (55) 46.9% (14)** No = 7

69.5%

— B. Lack of effective staff training

14.8% (36) 28.4% (69) 28.8% (70) 17.3% (42) 10.7% (26) No = 7

72.0%

— C. Poor assessment instruments

13.6% (33) 20.2% (49) **28.9% (70) 20.7% (50) 16.5% (40)** No = 8

66.1%

— D. Poor scoring instruments

12.4% (30) 21.9% (53) **31.8% (77) 21.5% (52) 12.4% (30)** No = 8

65.7%

— E. Poor policies and procedures

10.7% (26) 28.4% (69) 26.7% (65) 19.3% (47) 14.8% (36) No = 7

65.8%

— F. Lack of management information system data

16.5% (38) 25.2% (58) 38.3% (88) 12.2% (28) 7.8% (18) No = 20

80.0%

— G. Excessive Officer Workload

4.1% (10) 9.4% (23) 12.7% (31) **21.3% (52) 52.4% (128)** No = 6

73.7%

Impact Issues

\+ 28. The OCMS risk assessment system places offenders in the lowest level of supervision needed to protect public safety.

No = 5

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
7.8% (19)	29.8% (73)	35.1% (86)	27.3% (67)
		62.4%	

\+ 29. Through risk assessment, community programming is now better targeted through more effective allocation of resources.

No = 5

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
1.6% (4)	26.5% (65)	35.9% (88)	35.9% (88)
		71.8%	

\+ 30. The risk assessment system helps prioritize offenders for programs resources.

No = 3

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
3.6% (9)	33.6% (93)	35.6% (88)	27.1% (67)
		62.7%	

— 31. The risk assessment system does not help identify offenders that may present special supervision problems.

No = 3

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
42.1% (104)	38.9% (96)	16.6% (41)	2.4% (6)
81.0%			

— 32. The risk assessment system has led to a decrease in the percentage of offenders completing supervision.

No = 27

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
1.8% (4)	11.7% (26)	60.5% (135)	26.0% (58)
		86.5%	

? 33. Offender participation in community programs should not affect their risk assessment.

No = 8

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
3.7% (9)	16.9% (41)	52.5% (127)	26.9% (65)
		79.4%	

\+ 34. The risk assessment system decreases the probability of assaults on staff.

No = 9

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
0.4% (1)	13.7% (33)	27.0% (65)	58.9% (142)
		85.9%	

— 35. The risk assessment system does not help reduce my level of job stress.

No = 4

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
53.3% (131)	29.7% (73)	13.8% (34)	3.3% (8)
83.0%			

\+ 36. The risk assessment system has reduced the incidence of offender absconsions.

No = 17

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
1.3% (3)	2.6% (6)	29.2% (68)	67.0% (156)
		96.2%	

— 37. The risk assessment system has not reduced the frequency of serious offenses.

No = 14

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
49.6% (117)	35.6% (84)	10.6% (25)	4.2% (10)
85.2%			

\+ 38. The risk assessment system helps me do my job.

No = 2

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
4.4% (11)	48.8% (121)	28.2% (70)	18.5% (46)
53.2%			

39. The risk assessment system helps minimize my personal liability.

No = 5

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
9.8% (24)	46.1% (113)	22.9% (56)	21.2% (52)
55.9%			

Comments (optional): _____

Thank you for your help in completing this important survey. Please be sure that you have answered all questions. When you are finished, please deliver the questionnaire to the OCMS Specialist in your office who is responsible for forwarding them to a central collection point.

OREGON RAP SHEET CODING INSTRUCTIONS

We want to capture a chronological history of criminal convictions from the rap sheet for each offender in the sample. This will make it possible to summarize criminal history prior to the offender's admission to supervision and after admission. Each line entered on the attached coding form should represent a complete rap sheet entry.

Obviously, this kind of data collection requires careful interpretation of the rap sheet information because the offense charged at arrest is not necessarily the offense recorded at conviction. Furthermore, several rap sheet entries may have to be assessed to reconstruct a conviction event and the entries themselves may not always be sorted in a strict time order.

The best way to approach this may be to begin at the earliest entry date on the rap sheet and work forward, underlining or highlighting entries associated with a complete conviction event (i.e., a court appearance at which one or more convictions occurred). After this initial determination of what is important, it is easier to go back and code the events on the data collection form. The following coding definitions apply to the headings which appear on the data form (attached).

Conviction Date — Date of the conviction or arrest.

Offense Type Code — The numeric code which indicates the type of conviction offense or arrest charge.

Offense Class Code — Felony or Misdemeanor. The classification of the conviction/arrest. (This is optional if already indicated by the offense code)

Offense Disposition Code — This code indicates the sentence disposition of each conviction, i.e., jail, prison, probation, or fine. Enter up to two, if applicable, from the list below.

J = Jail Sentence
I = Prison Sentence
P = Probation Sentence
F = Fined
C = Convicted, sentence unknown
R = Revoked
A = Arrest, disposition unknown.
O = Other note in comment

Multiple Offense Convictions — If an offender is convicted of more than one offense on the same date, enter each offense of a <u>different</u> type on a separate line. A conviction on multiple counts of the same offense can be handled on one line. Just note the number of counts in the comment section.

CODING RAP SHEET ENTRIES IN THE PRE AND POST SUPERVISION ADMISSION PERIODS

Although the data collection format is the same, there is a difference in what kind of RAP sheet events should be recorded in the time periods before and after the offender was admitted to supervision. The major difference between the two periods is the handling of arrests. Arrests that do not result in a conviction should recorded for the post supervision admission period (the reference admission to supervision date for each offender in the sample is available on the attached list). During the period prior to supervision admission, only convictions should be recorded.

The easiest way to make this transition is to just drawn a line on the RAP sheet that indicates where the post supervision period begins. This line serves as a reminder to change the coding scheme and start entering arrests that do not result in a conviction. Since the post admission period is relatively short compared to the prior history, it should not be necessary to code a large number of these events. Just enter the arrest date under the Conviction Date heading, note the charge code under the Offense Type, and enter "A" in the Offense Disposition field.

In either the pre- or post-admission periods, revocations should be entered if they appear on the RAP sheet. If no offense code appears on the sheet just enter the date and an "R" in the Offense Disposition field.

Typically, there will be convictions or arrests recorded on the RAP sheet which are not clearly identified or which do not have descriptive codes attached to them. In these cases, either enter your best guess in the comment section or if their are a large number of similar entries create a new code for an existing field to identify the problem.

NOTE: The ASCII file with the sample names, numbers, and admission dates is in 817\sample.lis. The file layout is in 817\sample.fil. Richard can work with it if necessary.

OREGON RAP SHEET DATA COLLECTION FORM

OFFENDER ID# ____________________________

DATE ADMITTED TO SUPERVISION: ____/____/____

CONVICTION DATE MO/YR	OFFENSE TYPE CODE	OFFENSE CLASS	OFFENSE DISP CODES	COMMENT
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	
___/___	________	(____)	(___/___)	

(Attach additional sheets if necessary)

APPENDIX D

ANALYSIS PROTOCOL AND RESULTS FROM THE REVISED RISK ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Analysis Protocol and Results from the Revised Risk Assessment Development Process

The first step in the analysis was to determine the degree to which the Oregon History Risk Scale discriminates among offender groups with different rates of recidivism. Three principle outcome measures were used to test the efficiency of the scale. These were:

- New Felony Convictions
- New Violent Felony Convictions
- New Felony and Misdemeanor Convictions

The number of new Felony Convictions reported during the followup period was chosen as the primary outcome measure because felony convictions best reflect serious criminal behavior yet do not introduce the difficulties encountered in predicting future violations. (It should be noted that the scale was not designed to classify offenders on the basis of violence. Hence, while such capability would be deemed a significant "extra" from the scale, the validity of the instrument should not be based on its ability to separate offender groups based on rates of subsequent violent behavior.)

The overall discriminatory power of the current scale is presented in Table D1. As these data illustrate, cases rated high risk were convicted of new felonies at 4.36 times the rate of cases rated limited risk. And despite the fact that the scale was not developed to classify offenders based on proclivities for violence, high risk cases were four times more likely than limited risk cases to be convicted of a violent felony during the followup period.

Table D1
Oregon History Risk Scale
Outcomes by Risk Level

Risk Classification	% of Cases	New Convictions (Any type)	New Felony Convictions	New Violent Felony Convictions
Limited	11%	14.6%	7.8%	2.4%
Low	39%	22.5%	13.2%	1.8%
Medium	21%	31.3%	22.9%	5.5%
High	28%	42.1%	34.0%	9.8%

Using multiple regression analysis to test current scale variables against each outcome measure yielded predictable results. In no instance does the current scale "explain" more than 9% of the variance in criminal behavior among cases in the sample. Two variables, substance abuse within the last three years and prior incarcerations were consistently omitted from the regression equation; the first because it was not highly correlated with the dependent variable and the second due to multicolinearity (with prior convictions).

To further test the validity of the Oregon History Risk Scale, scores were crosstabulated with outcomes for various offender groups. Because the sample included rather small numbers of African Americans and Hispanics, cases from these ethnic groups were added to the analysis in order to produce more reliable results. Nevertheless, some classifications (e.g. limited risk) contain small numbers of cases and therefore results should be viewed with some caution.

As Tables D3 and D4 illustrate, the current instrument does not discriminate as well for Oregon Minorities as it does for White offenders. Both African Americans and Hispanics have higher rates of new convictions than Whites and the overall differences in felony conviction rates between limited risk and high risk offenders is greater for both minorities than for Whites (34% vs. 24%). However, the difference in felony rates between low and high African Americans is only 11% (28% to 39%) and low risk Hispanics actually had a lower rate of recidivism than those in limited risk category (this may simply be a function of the small number of cases in limited risk). It should also be noted that the current scale places nearly half (45%) of all African American offenders in the high risk category.

TABLE D3

Oregon History Risk Scale
Felony Conviction Rate by Ethnicity

Risk Classification	African American			Hispanic			All Others		
	Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Limited	32	8%	5%	23	11%	16%	185	12%	8%
Low	112	28%	28%	100	47%	14%	630	40%	12%
Moderate	79	19%	33%	38	18%	40%	332	21%	22%
High	181	45%	39%	50	24%	50%	423	27%	32%
TOTAL	404	100%	32%	211	100%	27%	1,570	100%	19%

Some problems were noted with the scale's ability to classify women offenders as well (although, again, the small number of cases in some risk categories mean that results should be interpreted with caution). There is virtually no differences in felony conviction rates reported for Medium and High risk women in the sample.

Table D4

Oregon History Risk Scale
Felony Conviction Rate by Gender

Risk Classification	Female			Male		
	Sample Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Sample Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Limited	44	15%	7%	162	11%	8%
Low	155	53%	14%	562	37%	13%
Medium	53	18%	30%	327	21%	22%
High	42	14%	29%	476	31%	34%
TOTAL	294	100%	18%	1,527	100%	21%

Because the current scale classifies cases relatively well overall, we deviated somewhat from our usual scale construction methodology. Rather than approaching the study as a scale development effort, we instead, accepted the validity of the current instrument and attempted to introduce changes that would improve classification capabilities and correct the problems of item complexity and the scales applicability to minority cases. Hence, the following results were obtained using the entire sample rather than dividing it into construction and validation samples.

The first step in scale revision was to reduce all factors to interval level data (where possible) and to compute correlation coefficiencies with all outcome measures. Factors with significant correlations were then entered into a series of regression analyses to determine which combination of factors best explains the variances in outcomes. It must be noted, however, that due to limitations of regression in scale construction efforts (discussed earlier) final item selection is not based on regression results.

Correlations between items selected for the revised scale and outcomes are presented in Table D5.

Table D5

Revised Scale Items
Correlations with Outcomes

Factor	Felony Conviction	Violent Felonies	All Convictions
Age at Admission	.104	.107	.146
Conviction Free - 3 yrs	.174	.087	.199
Probation/Parole Violations	.235	.147	.262
Failure to Appear/Escape	.150	.050	.148
Convictions for:			
Robbery	.115	.138	.122
Burglary	.149	.182	.187
Theft	.157	.097	.185
Prior Drug Offenses	.115	-.024*	.073
Prior Incarcerations	.179	.109	.190
Substance Abuse	.035*	.018*	.048*

Note: All correlations except those with * are significant at the .01 level.

Following selection of a set of factors that would (potentially) comprise the final scale, a series of simulations were conducted, varying the items used, the weight assigned to each item and the cut-off points for assigning cases to different risk levels. This interactive approach resulted in the maximum degree of discrimination that could be attained using the date available. Four groups were identified as outlined in Tables D6 and D7. The revised scale not only produced better discrimination based on rates of new felony convictions, but also effectively identified groups of offenders with low, moderate, and high proclivities for violence.

TABLE D6 FOLLOW-UP FELONY CONVICTION RATE: REVISED CLASSIFICATION				
Risk Classification	Sample Cases	% Sample	Felony Conviction	
			Cases	Rate
Very Low	555	30%	47	8%
Low	714	39%	124	17%
Medium	357	20%	119	33%
High	195	11%	84	43%
TOTAL	**1,821**	**100%**	**374**	**21%**

TABLE D7 FOLLOW-UP VIOLENT FELONY* CONVICTION RATE: REVISED CLASSIFICATION				
Risk Classification	Sample Cases	% Sample	Violent Felony Conviction	
			Cases	Rate
Very Low	555	30%	7	1.3%
Low	714	39%	21	2.9%
Medium	357	20%	37	10.4%
High	195	11%	25	12.8%
TOTAL	**1,821**	**100%**	**90**	**4.9%**

*Includes assault, homicide, rape, kidnapping, robbery, sex abuse, and burglary.

Perhaps the greatest benefit to be derived from the new scale is that it will nearly triple the number of offenders rated very low (or limited) risk, without increasing the failure rate for the group. In other words, the revised instrument identified an additional 349 individuals (19% of the entire sample) who, as a group, recidivate at the same rate as current limited risk offenders. Furthermore, the new low risk group, despite containing far more offenders is even less likely to be convicted of a violent offense that the current group classified as limited risk.

The revised scale classified a smaller proportion of the sample high risk than did the current Oregon History Risk Scale. The "failure rate," however, for the highest risk group rose from 34% to 43%, undoubtedly a function of greater selectivity. The violent offense rate increased from 9.8% to 12.8%.

The final step in the analysis was to test the revised scale on various offender groups including women, African Americans, and Hispanics. These results are presented in Tables D8 through D10.

Some issues encountered with the Oregon History Risk Scale remain, at least to a degree, despite the recommended revisions. The new scale alleviates the scoring complexities, but still does not discriminate among risk levels as well for minorities and women as it does for White males. African American males in the sample who scored very low risk had an exceptionally low recidivism rate, but differences among the remaining three groups was marginal at best. For women, separation by risk levels was very good, except between those rated medium and high risk. The failure to attain the degree of separation desired for both African Americans and women may be as much a function of sample size as anything else. It should be noted, however, that the revised scale classifies the vast majority (82%) of women offenders as low or very low risk and decreases the proportion of African Americans rated high risk. Both of these findings are positive. Oregon should, however, monitor results for these groups to determine if the problems noted above are resolved as the number of cases in each risk category increase and better reliability is established.

TABLE D8

OFFENDER SEX:
REVISED CLASSIFICATION

Risk Classification	Female			Male		
	Sample Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Sample Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Very Low	114	39%	8%	441	29%	9%
Low	127	43%	18%	587	38%	17%
Medium	32	11%	41%	325	21%	33%
High	21	7%	38%	174	11%	44%
TOTAL	294	100%	18%	1,527	100%	21%

TABLE D9

AFRICAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC, ALL OTHER*
REVISED CLASSIFICATION

Risk Classification	African American			Hispanic			All Others		
	Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	Cases	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Very Low	74	18%	6%	67	32%	15%	493	31%	8%
Low	136	34%	34%	93	44%	24%	618	39%	15%
Moderate	117	29%	40%	33	16%	43%	299	19%	32%
High	77	19%	40%	18	8%	65%	160	10%	43%
TOTAL	404	100%	32%	211	100%	27%	1,570	100%	19%

TABLE D10

COMMITMENT OFFENSE GROUP:
REVISED CLASSIFICATION

Risk Classification	Violent Offense		Sex Offense		Property Offense		Driving Offense		Drug Offense		Other Offense	
	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate	% Cases	Felony Conviction Rate
Very Low	20%	4%	55%	10%	13%	8%	50%	8%	21%	14%	44%	5%
Low	33%	21%	30%	9%	38%	20%	36%	14%	51%	18%	40%	14%
Medium	22%	30%	9%	50%	31%	36%	12%	39%	18%	28%	11%	26%
High	25%	46%	6%	57%	18%	46%	2%	17%	2%	22%	5%	23%
TOTAL	100 %	26%	100 %	16%	100 %	28%	100 %	14%	100 %	19%	100 %	12%
CASES	274		111		506		283		364		283	

APPENDIX E

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING LAW ENFORCEMENT DATA SHEETS

STATE OF OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

INTEROFFICE MEMO

TO: Jean Hill, Administrator
Information Systems Division

DATE: September 1, 1993

FROM: Brian Bemus, Program Manager
Classification and Transfer Division

SUBJECT: FUTURE MASS LEDS RUNS

Given the difficulties generating the criminal history data necessary for the community corrections risk assessment validation and effectiveness studies, I would like to provide the following perspective and advice.

First, we should assume that we will routinely be facing similar needs for large samples requiring criminal history data. Since it is unlikely that automated methods of gleaning the desired information from LEDS will be available in the near future, we need to develop a standard approach to requesting and processing requests for LEDS data.

Second, the last set of sample cases for the effectiveness study needed to be processed when available ISD staff were on vacation. As a result, I went directly to Norm Worley at LEDS, explained the predicament, and he was able to figure out a way to directly transfer an ASCII file from a 3 1/2" floppy disk to the EXEC mainframe to run the LEDS checks. The previous process involved transferring the ASCII file to the AS400, creating a tape, transporting the tape to LEDS, transporting the tape to the EXEC computer system, and running the record checks before returning the tape and the output. It seems obvious that, in the future, we should develop a process that is similar to the direct process and skip the headache associated with the creation and transporting of the tapes.

Finally, a large number (214) of the risk validation cases did not have "hits" when running the mass LEDS checks. Only three of those were sealed and therefore unavailable. A review of these missing cases indicates no pattern but a LEDS printout should have been produced. While the impact of these missing cases will be indicated on a project-by-project basis, the identification and monitoring of mass produced LEDS data should include procedures to ensure data quality.

As a result, I recommend that we develop a standard ASCII format to request LEDS data. At a minimum, the format should include:

Variable	Location
SID	1 - 8
DOB	9 - 18
NAME (LFM)	19 - ?

Even though LEDS needs only the SID number, the other information can be used by research or contract staff to follow up on missing data. Additional procedures controlling access to information and structuring contact between the staff/organization requesting and using the data should also be developed. I believe that this process, etc., could be developed by research staff and reviewed by the research council.

BB:kb

c: Barb McGuire
Laura Nebon
Chuck Brinkerhoff