

Name of Tool	Self-Appraisal Questionnaire (SAQ)
Category	General Risk Assessment (Awaiting Validation)
Author / Publisher	Loza
Year	1996

Description

- The SAQ is a 72-item actuarial self-report assessment consisting of true and false questions. The purpose of it is to predict violent and non-violent recidivism among adults who have offended ([Mitchell, Caudy and Layton, 2012](#)).
- These 72 items are spread across seven subscales included in the assessment: (1) Criminal Tendencies (antisocial attitudes, beliefs, feelings and behaviours); (2) Antisocial Personality Problems, looking at characteristics similar to those covered in antisocial personality disorder; (3) Conduct Problems (assesses childhood behavioural issues); (4) Offender's criminal history; (5) Alcohol and drug abuse; (6) Antisocial Associates. These six subscales are used to predict recidivism. There is an Anger subscale, measuring reactions to anger; however, this is not included in the total score because of the controversial relationship between anger and recidivism. This scale is instead used to assign individuals to treatment programmes dealing with anger. Also included is a Validity subscale for validating an individual's truthfulness in responding to SAQ Items ([Loza, 2018](#)).
- Of the 72 items presented in the assessment, only 62 items are used to predict recidivism. The remainder of statements may assist with determining issues such as substance abuse and personality disorders. Risk is classified as 'low', 'low-moderate,' 'moderate,' 'high-moderate' and 'high' ([Loza, 2018](#)).
- The SAQ could potentially be used to determine the most appropriate treatment program, e.g. if an individual who has offended has a high score on the SAQ anger sub-scale, an anger management program could be offered to them ([Loza, 2018](#)).

Age Appropriateness

18+

Assessor Qualifications

The SAQ can be administered by a variety of forensic professionals: psychologists, psychiatrists, parole officers, behavioural technologists, nurses and others trained in administering psychological tests or questionnaires. A minimum of The assessor should have graduate-level training and qualifications in administering other similar tests and measures. ([Loza, 2018](#)).

Tool Development

- The SAQ was initially developed to cover the main themes found in the recidivism literature (most prominently featured in anti-social theories) (Loza, 1996).

- [Loza, Loza-Fanous and Heseltine \(2007\)](#) in a 9 year follow-up study, the SAQ demonstrated a sensitivity of 59% for non-violent recidivism and 70% for violent recidivism. It was also found that the SAQ had a specificity of 74% for non-violent recidivism and 62% for violent recidivism.
- Mitchell and Mackenzie (2006) found that the SAQ was unable to predict recidivism in high-risk individuals with drug offences. However the findings of this study have been disputed by the author of the SAQ on the grounds of limitations in the methodology, statistical analyses and sample selection (see Dhaliwal, Loza and Reddon, 2007).
- [Loza et al. \(2005\)](#) found moderate predictive accuracy (AUC =.70) in relation to re-incarceration in a sample of females. No significant differences were found between the responses of African American individuals compared to Caucasian ones.
- [Hemmati \(2004\)](#) in a sample of individuals aged between 12 and 20 years, significant differences were found between violent and non-violent individuals on the SAQ total scores.
- [Villeneuve, Oliver and Loza \(2003\)](#) found the composite SAQ scores were significantly higher in the high-risk psychiatric sample when compared to general correctional individuals with no history of major psychiatric illness. Moderate to large correlations ranging from .28 to .50 were found for violent recidivism, general recidivism, 'new sentence' and 'any failure'.
- [Mitchell, Caudy and Layton \(2012\)](#) found that the SAQ total score yielded a modest prediction of reconviction, accurately predicting this for circa 63% of all possible pairs of individuals.
- [Kubiak et al. \(2014\)](#) assessed the usefulness of the SAQ with a sample of 534 incarcerated females. Whilst self-reported violence was considered to be a strong predictor of SAQ scores, many of the women in the most violent group did not reach the cut-off points in their scoring. To that end, the authors suggest that the scoring thresholds are modified for females in order to adequately assess their treatment needs.
- A study of 125 males in South Africa found that the SAQ produced reliable scores, suggesting it is appropriate for application in this country ([Prinsloo and Hesselink, 2011](#)).
- [Rodrigues and colleagues \(2016\)](#) applied the SAQ to 121 males within a correctional facility for mental health issues. It was found that the tool significantly predicted general recidivism (AUC=.74) and predicted institutional aggression (includes threats, verbal aggression or assault) (AUC=.61).
- [Andreau-Rodriguez, Peña-Fernández and Loza \(2016\)](#) administered the SAQ to 276 individuals in Spain to test its ability to measure recidivism. Recidivism in this study was defined as a second or subsequent entry in prison by the same person for committing a violent crime in the community. The SAQ showing acceptable accuracy in discriminating between violent and non-violent recidivists, with the total score generating an AUC of .80.

General Notes

- Majority of research has been conducted or co-authored by the author of the SAQ assessment; although some international studies have emerged in recent years.
- The SAQ showed moderate correlations with the PCL-R and VRAG total scores, suggesting a degree of concurrent validity (assessing measures to see if they produce similar results) ([Andreau-Rodriguez, Peña-Fernández, and Loza, 2016](#)).
- For the most accurate predictions, [Mitchell, Caudy and Layton \(2012\)](#) advised using the SAQ total scores with those generated by age and number of prior arrests.