

Name of Tool	Juvenile Risk Assessment Scale (JRAS)
Category	Youth Assessment: Sexual Violence Risk (Awaiting Validation)
Author / Publisher	Hiscox, Witt, and Haran
Year	2010

Description

- The JRAS is a 14-item scale designed to assess the risk of reoffending sexually among males who have been adjudicated for a sexual offense. It is used by New Jersey to place sexually abusive youth into risk tiers in accord with Megan’s Law.
- The items include static and dynamic variables and are sub-divided into three broad areas: (1) sex offence history, (2) antisocial behaviour and (3) environmental characteristics.
- Risk is characterised as ‘low,’ ‘medium’ and ‘high.’
- Designed to assess sexually abusive youth who are adolescents.

Age Appropriateness

12 to 19

Assessor Qualifications

Assessors should undertake the appropriate training prior to administration of the tool.

Tool Development

- A decision by the *New Jersey Supreme Court* was the impetus for the development of a risk assessment scale for juveniles. The JRAS was based on the Registrant Risk Assessment Scale (RRAS) for adults who have offended ([Ferguson, Eidelson and Witt, 1998](#); [Witt et al., 1996](#)).
- [Hempel et al. \(2013\)](#) - the JRAS did not significantly predict sexual recidivism.
- [Caldwell, Ziemke and Vitacco \(2008\)](#) - the JRAS demonstrated excellent inter-rater reliability (ICC) of .94. Despite this, the tool was unable to predict sexual, non-sexual, violent or general offending.
- [Hiscox, Witt and Haran \(2007\)](#) - the JRAS had moderate inter-rater reliability ($r = .66$). It also demonstrated small correlations with sexual recidivism ($r = .15$). The sexual deviance factor did not predict recidivism (both sexual and no-sexual); the major predictive factor in the JRAS was the antisocial behaviour one.
- [Ralston and Epperson \(2013\)](#) scored the JRAS alongside the JSORRAT-II and two adult instruments on 636 juveniles who had sexually offended. Recidivism was tracked over two time periods: before adulthood (age eighteen) and afterwards. Findings showed that the adult tools were able to predict all types of juvenile recidivism at the same level of accuracy as the juvenile ones. The predictive validity of the JRAS and the other tools in predicting adult sexual recidivism was substantially lower than the predictive accuracy achieved in predicting juvenile sexual recidivism.

General Notes

- The JRAS is not designed to be used by younger children, adults or females ([Rich, 2009](#)).
- No validation with females.
- There is some crossover with internet offending, for the possession of child pornography counts as one offence. The victims of internet offences, however, are not scored as victims on the JRAS.
- Validation studies on the JRAS have been based on low-risk samples which may contribute to the lack of predictive accuracy in relation to recidivism ([Hempel et al., 2013](#)).
- Manual available at: www.nj.gov/oag/dcj/megan/jras-manual-scale-606.pdf