

Name of Tool	Offender Assessment System (OASys)
Category	General Risk Assessment (Validated)
Author / Publisher	Home Office
Year	2002

Description

- OASys is an actuarial risk and needs assessment tool used by the prison and probation services in England and Wales.
- The OASys is composed of 14 subsections and generates a summary risk score in order to assess likelihood of reoffending and risk of harm to self and others.
- In August 2009, the OASys General reoffending Predictor (OGP) and the OASys Violence Predictor (OVP) were introduced, and the old OASys score was discontinued. The August 2009 update also introduced ‘layered OASys,’ with Basic, Standard and Full assessments of similar structure but different length becoming available (Howard, personal communication, January 2013).
- The OGP and the OVP predict “the likelihood of nonviolent and violent proven reoffending respectively” by combining information on identified static and dynamic risk factors ([Howard, 2011: i](#)).
- An electronic version (eOASys) was introduced in 2005.

Age Appropriateness

18+

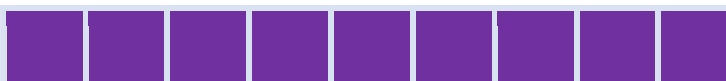
Assessor Qualifications

OASys assessments must be completed by prison or probation staff who possess the necessary knowledge of behaviours of those who offend. Continued refresher training on the administration and scoring of this tool is recommended.

Strengths

- OASys includes a section dedicated to assessing the suitability of interventions.
- OASys also incorporates a self-assessment component that allows the individual to record their views on their own risk/needs.

Empirical Grounding



- OASys is grounded in the ‘what works’ evidence base as per risk-need-responsivity principles with regards to reducing reoffending ([Moore and Howard 2015](#)).

- The manual states that the measure’s development was founded from prison and probation effective practice guidelines and from empirical grounding of the LSI-R and the Assessment Case management and Evaluation (ACE) (Home Office, 1999).

Inter-Rater Reliability	
a) UK Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Debidin (2009) - moderate inter-rater reliability was found in three case studies (ICCs ranged from .56 to .65). •Morton (2009) and Debidin (2009) - most reliable items in the OASys were: accommodation, lifestyle/associates, drug misuse, Education, Training and Employability, Relationships, Emotional Well-being and Attitudes. The least reliable items were: Financial Management, Alcohol, Thinking and Behaviour and Risk of Serious Harm.
b) International Research	None available at present.

Validation History	
General Predictive Accuracy	
a) UK Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Howard and Dixon (2012a) found that changes in OVP scores between the initial and final assessments, significantly predicted re-offending in a sample of Welsh individuals. •Debidin (2009) – the OASys achieved moderate to high AUC values for different types of offending ranging from ‘Homicide and assault’ (.66) to ‘Weapons Possession’ (.74). •Howard (2009) – the OASys achieved moderate predictive accuracy. Accuracy of the instrument improved when used with the OVP and the OGP. The AUC values improved to 80% for non-violent offending and 76% for violent re-offending compared to 76% and 68% obtained from the OASys scores alone. •Howard et al. (2006) - 26% of persons rated as ‘low likelihood of reconviction’ were reconvicted within 24 months, compared with 58% assessed as ‘medium-risk’ and 87% assessed as ‘high-risk’.
b) International Research	None available at present.

Validation History

Applicability: Females									
a) UK Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debidin (2009) – the OASys attained moderate to high AUC values of .72 to .81 for violent and non-violent offences in a female offending sample (n=1,585) 								
b) International Research	None available at present.								

Validation History									
Applicability: Ethnic Minorities									
a) UK Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predictive validity for black and ethnic minority groups was found to be lower in a study by Howard (2015a). • Debidin (2009) - low to high AUC values obtained for individuals of other ethnic minorities ranging from .57 to .75 for violent and non-violent offences. • Howard and Dixon's (2012a) study of the OVP recorded 7% non-white participants in the 2002/2004 cohort and 8% non-white participant representation in the 2004/2005 data set. 								
b) International Research	None available at present.								

Validation History									
Applicability: Mental Disorders									
No Empirical Evidence Available									
<p>Howard and Dixon (2012a) report: "The present psychiatric treatment item seems crude but reliable: unlike other items in section 10 (Emotional Well-being), only basic information and training are required to score it. Most OASys assessments record little or no direct information on personality disorder, psychopathic personality features or active psychotic symptoms."</p>									

Contribution to Risk Practice									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OASys has the ability to create awareness of static and dynamic risk factors related to the individual's risk of recidivism. It can also prompt further assessment of identified risk factors. • The OASys assessments, including the OGP and OVP scores, are summarised to inform Pre-Sentence Reports within the National Probation Service for England and Wales. • Many of the factors identified by the OASys can act as targets for treatment/change. • Factors included in the OASys can inform offence analyses and risk formulations. 									

- The OASys can contribute to risk management plans for more complex cases which require intensive monitoring and more detailed offence analyses. The tool contains a 'Risk of Serious Harm' section which allows the assessor to identify factors related to this construct.
- Based on a validation study of almost fifteen thousand individuals who had committed sexual offences, a sexual offending component the 'Sexual Predictor' has been added to the OASys in order to predict contact sexual reoffending ([Howard and Barnett, 2015](#)).

Other Considerations

- [Fitzgibbon and Green \(2006\)](#) and [Fitzgibbon \(2008\)](#) - concerns relating to the accuracy of the OASys in predicting recidivism in sub-groups of such as those with mental disorders and ethnic minorities. Other concerns regarding its utility in aiding parole decisions.
- [Morton \(2009\)](#) and Debidin (2009) - limited inter-rater reliability of some of the subsections on the OASys.
- Few validation studies published in peer-reviewed journals. Majority of validation studies conducted by the Home Office.
- OGP Version 2 (OGP2) and OVP Version 2 (OVP2) have been peer-reviewed and will be published in a forthcoming Ministry of Justice publication (Howard, in preparation). The OGP2 and OVP2 includes an 'offence-free time' component, which enables estimates to be made for those who have spent time in the community without reoffending, given that the likelihood of reoffending is greatest immediately after sentence ([Howard, 2011](#)). The compendium also includes validation evidence for the predictive accuracy of the OGP2 and the OVP2 in different offending groups according to age, gender and ethnicity.
- The compendium will also include a study constructing and validating a predictor of sexual reoffending, provisionally named the OASys Sexual reoffending Predictor (OSP) (Howard, personal communication, January 2013).
- The implementation date of OGP2, OVP2 and OSP has not been confirmed.
- [Howard \(2015c\)](#) had a series of recommendations with regards to the positive factors of the OASys: assessors should recognise the importance of both positive (personal strengths) and risk factors, something which could be highlighted during training; monitoring the recording of positive factors to ensure current ones are being maintained and to be aware of the development of others.
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