Name of Tool	Sex Offender Risk Appraisal Guide (SORAG)
Category	Sexual Offending (Validated)
Author / Publisher	Quinsey, Harris, Rice and Cormier
Year	1998

Description

• The SORAG is a 14-item actuarial scale designed principally to assess risk for violent recidivism (including sexually violent recidivism) among adults released into the community. Items on the scale are: living with biological parents until age 16; elementary school maladjustment; history of alcohol problems; never been married at time of index offence; criminal history scores for nonviolent and violent offences; number of convictions for previous sexual offences; history of sexual offences (for girls under the age of 14); failure on prior conditional release; age at index offence; diagnosis of schizophrenia or any other personality disorder; phallometric test; psychopathy checklist (Rice and Harris, 2016).

• The total risk score is used to classify individuals who have committed sexual offences into nine risk categories known as 'bins' (Rossegger et al., 2013).

• The SORAG is an extension of the Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (VRAG) and shares ten items with it (Parent, Guay and Knight, 2011; Quinsey et al., 2006).

• The PCL:R (Hare, 2003) score features as an item within the SORAG. It uses clinical records as a basis for scoring and incorporates PCL:R scores.

• The intended and recommended purpose of the SORAG is to render an estimate of the long-term risk of criminal violence in general.

Age Appropriateness

18+

Assessor Qualifications

Expertise in risk assessment for sexual offending. Assessors must also undergo the relevant training on the instrument.

Strengths

• The SORAG generally appears to exhibit higher correlations with violent recidivism in comparison to other instruments (e.g. Static-99 and SVR-20) developed for use with individuals who have committed sexual offences. (Rettenberger and Eher, 2007).

Empirical Grounding

The SORAG draws on the empirical literature in relation to sexual recidivism and that related to the VRAG. Ten of the items are derived from the VRAG (Rettenberger and Eher, 2007).

Inter-Rater Reliability	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □
a) UK Research	None available at present.
b) International Research	• Walters, Knight and Thornton (2009) – the SORAG generated a high ICC score of .89. • Langton et al. (2007) - large correlation coefficient of .90 observed for inter-rater reliability of the SORAG. • Rettenberger and Eher (2007) – the SORAG achieved an ICC value of .93 in a German sample of individuals committed of sexual offences. • Ducro and Pham (2006) - excellent ICC of .92 attained for the SORAG.

Validation History

General Predictive Accuracy	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
a) UK Research	None available at present.
b) International Research	• Rettenberger et al. (2017) examined the German version of the SORAG in a sample of 1104 individuals in Austria. The SORAG was found to have a small but significant predictive validity over the VRAG and PCL-R, yielding a moderate AUC of 0.74. • Parent, Guay and Knight (2011) found the SORAG had a moderate AUC of .69 for predicting recidivism in a group of 590 individuals who had committed sexual offences. • A study of 137 individuals in Switzerland gave moderate AUC scores of 0.69 and 0.67 for total risk scores and risk bins respectively (Rossegger et al., 2013). • Rice and Harris (2016) found the SORAG yielded high predictive accuracy for general and violent recidivism, with the AUC giving a score of 0.73. • Rettenberger et al. (2010) – the SORAG generated an AUC value of .68 for general violent recidivism and .72 for general criminal recidivism within a subgroup of rapists.

	Within the extra-familial molestation subgroup, the SORAG exhibited moderate to high accuracy in predicting sexual recidivism (.71), sexual violent recidivism (.62), general violent recidivism (.81) and general criminal recidivism (.77).
	• Eher et al. (2008) – the SORAG was found to be a highly predictive accurate tool, particularly with a subgroup of individuals who had committed child sexual offences (AUC = .82).
	• Pham and Ducro (2008) found moderate AUCs for prediction of general recidivism (.69), violent recidivism (.71) and sexual recidivism (.62).
	• Langton et al. (2007) – the SORAG demonstrated moderate accuracy in predicting serious violent offending (.71).
	• The predictive validity of the SORAG was tested in 258 adult males. Sexual recidivism yielded an AUC of .65; this was in spite of a relatively low risk in the sample, given 53.5% had committed incest offences. The AUC generated for violent recidivism was .69 (Nunes et al., 2002).

Validation History

Applicability: Females								
No empirical evidence at present.								

Validation History

Applicability: Ethnic Minorities								
No empirical evidence at present.								

Validation History

Applicability: Mental Disorders	■	■	■					
a) UK Research	None available at present.							
b) International Research	• Looman (2006) - moderate AUC scores attained for the SORAG (.69).							

	• Ducro and Pham (2006) – the SORAG achieved moderate AUC values ranging from .64 to .65 in a sample of those convicted of child abuse and rape from a high secure hospital.

Contribution to Risk Practice

• The SORAG provides a brief assessment of the risk of sexual recidivism and can prompt further analysis of the identified risk.
• The SORAG shows some consideration for responsivity issues (e.g. psychopathy).

Other Considerations

• The SORAG is a risk assessment tool comprised solely of static variables and therefore it is not possible to select treatment targets, measure change or progress in treatment or predict the time frame in which an individual is likely to re-offend (Yates, 2005).
• The tool is time-consuming to administer and is more difficult to score as some of the items are taken from the VRAG.
• The tool relies on PCL:R rating scores as part of the predictive measurement.
• It has been found that the SORAG has better accuracy in predicting violent rather than sexual recidivism (see Rettenberger and Eher, 2007).
• Other investigations have found that this instrument has better predictive accuracy with different sub-groups of individuals who committed sexual offences (Ducro and Pham, 2006).