

## **Review of Empirically Based Risk/Needs Assessment Tools for Youth Justice**

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# **Review of Empirically Based Risk/Needs Assessment Tools for Youth Justice: Amended Report for Public Release**

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## **Introduction to Amended Report for Public Release**

This report was commissioned on 8 November 2005 by the Office of Youth, Department of Communities (DOC). DOC requested that the consultants broadly scope risk/needs assessment tools for youth justice purposes and evaluate the evidence base of these tools to recommend an appropriate tool for DOC. Importantly, this review was only one tool used by DOC in the decision to adopt the most appropriate risk/needs assessment for their purposes. Consequently, the conclusions of the report may not be definitive. The Executive Summary and the Recommendations have been removed from this amended report for public release. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of DOC.

**Table 1: Summary of results of the comparative evaluation of youth justice risk/needs assessment tools**

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Development</b>	<b>User-Friendly</b>	<b>Includes Responsivity Factors</b>	<b>Reliability &amp; Consistency</b>	<b>Validity</b>	<b>Point Utilised in Juvenile Justice System</b>	<b>Applicability to Australian context</b>	<b>Special Needs Groups</b>
<b>ASSET</b>	Empirically-based (although also input using a consensus approach) with theoretical groundings.	Poor	Yes	Inter-rater reliability <sup>a</sup> : between poor to fair  Internal consistency: very good	Predictive validity: strong  Construct validity: Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bail supervision and support;</li> <li>• Request for a court report (pre-sentence report and specific sentence report);</li> <li>• Community disposals during the assessment, quarterly review and closure stages;</li> <li>• Custodial sentences at the assessment, transfer to the community and closure stages.</li> <li>• Final Warnings.</li> </ul>	Information unavailable/no research conducted	Good (age, ethnicity, sex)
<b>SB ARA</b>	Empirically-based (minor adjustments through consensus methodology) with theoretical groundings.	Moderate	No	Inter-rater reliability: adequate  Internal consistency: very good	Predictive Validity: Good  Construct Validity: Good  Convergent Validity: Moderate to strong	Entrance into the probation system	Information unavailable/no research conducted	Good (for sex)

Tool	Development	User-Friendly	Includes Responsivity Factors	Reliability & Consistency	Validity	Point Utilised in Juvenile Justice System	Applicability to Australian context	Special Needs Groups
<b>SECAPS</b>	Empirically-based, although items un-related to recidivism are included in the full assessment.	Information unavailable/no research conducted	Yes	For Scales of SECAPS v. recidivism risk index:  Internal consistencies: Adequate  Test/Retest Stability <sup>a</sup> : moderate to high	Predictive Validity: Recidivism Risk Index:  Strong  Concurrent Validity: Good for ADHD subscale and depression subscale	Secure care	Demonstrated	Good (for sex and ethnicity)
<b>VONIY</b>	Empirically-based with theoretical groundings.	Good	Yes	Internal consistency:  Total: Good Scales: Most are acceptable, two subscales just below .6 benchmark  Inter-scale correlation among subscales: Modest	Predictive Validity: Information unavailable/no research conducted  Construct Validity: Preliminary evidence indicates is good	Community Based orders, Secure care or Parole	For validity: Information unavailable/no research conducted  For reliability: demonstrated	Information unavailable/no research conducted
<b>WSJCA/ YASI</b>	Empirically-based	Information	No	YASI: Internal	<b>Predictive Validity:</b>	Any setting that requires an	Information unavailable/no	Good (for WSJCA for:

Tool	Development	User-Friendly	Includes Responsivity Factors	Reliability & Consistency	Validity	Point Utilised in Juvenile Justice System	Applicability to Australian context	Special Needs Groups
	(although the assessment was refined using a consensus-based method) with theoretical groundings.	unavailable/no research conducted		consistency: acceptable to good	<p><b>WSJCA: Pre-Screen Instrument:</b> moderate</p> <p><b>Full Assessment:</b> Moderate</p> <p>YASI: Preliminary evidence supports trends in the expected direction</p> <p>Construct Validity: Good</p>	assessment of a juvenile's risk and needs, including probation, detention, youth services.	research conducted	ethnicity, sex, age and sex offenders)
<b>YLS/CMI/YLS/CMI-AA</b>	Empirically-based with theoretical groundings.	Mixed: YLS/CMI: Poor YLS/CMI-AA: Good	Yes	<p>Internal Consistency: Acceptable to good (for the majority of domains)</p> <p>Inter-rater reliability: YLS.CMI: upper-end of fair to</p>	<p>Predictive validity: Moderate to strong</p> <p>Concurrent Validity: YLS/CMI: Good</p> <p>Convergent</p>	All points in the youth justice system that requires an assessment of a juvenile's risk and needs.	YLS/CMI-AA: Demonstrated	YLS/CMI: Good (sex, ethnicity)

Tool	Development	User-Friendly	Includes Responsivity Factors	Reliability & Consistency	Validity	Point Utilised in Juvenile Justice System	Applicability to Australian context	Special Needs Groups
				excellent  Test-Retest Stability: YLS/CMI-AA: fair to good <sup>a</sup>	Validity: YLS/CMI: Good  Construct Validity: Good			

<sup>a</sup> Indicates that there were methodological problems in the associated research.

**Please note:** Outcomes in relation to reducing recidivism and impact on the quality of the youth justice system were excluded from the summary table as no research was available for any of the risk/needs tools. However, all of the risk/needs assessments can improve the quality of the youth justice system through the collection of data of the client base so that services can be targeted to the needs of those youths entering the system.

**Please also note:** The SECAPS and the YASI also sought middle-range Cronbach's alphas

## Table Codings

### **User-friendly:**

- Poor: evidence indicates the instrument is not user-friendly
- Moderate: anecdotal evidence indicates the instrument is user-friendly
- Good: survey evidence indicates the instrument is user-friendly
- Mixed- there is evidence indicating that the instrument is and is not user-friendly, whereby both sources of evidence are approximately equal in terms of reliability
- Information unavailable/no research conducted

### **Reliability**

#### *Internal consistency:*

- Acceptable: Cronbach's alpha above .6, but below .7
- Good: Cronbach's alpha above .7, but below .8
- Very good: Cronbach's alpha above .8
- Information unavailable/no research conducted

#### *Test-Retest Stability*

- Good- Evidence supports the test-retest stability
- Poor- Evidence does not support the test-retest stability
- Information unavailable/no research conducted

#### *Inter-rater reliability*

- Poor: ICC below .4
- Fair: ICC between .4 and .75
- Excellent: ICC above .75
- Information unavailable/no research conducted

### **Validity:**

#### *Predictive Validity (based on overall weight of evidence)*

- Good- ROC .7 or above and/or strong significant relationships
- Moderate- ROC .6 to .7 and/or moderate significant relationships
- Poor- ROC .5 to .6 and/or non-significant relationships
- Information unavailable/no research conducted

#### *Concurrent Validity*

- Good- some support for
- Poor- findings are not in the expected direction or non-significant
- Information unavailable/no research conducted

#### *Convergent Validity*

- Good- some support for
- Poor- findings are not in the expected direction or non-significant
- Information unavailable/no research conducted

#### *Construct Validity*

- Good- some support for
-

- Poor- findings are not in the expected direction or non-significant
- Information unavailable/no research conducted

**Applicability to Australian Context:**

- Implemented but undemonstrated- Has been implemented in Australia, however, there is no evidence the tool is valid in the Australian context
- Demonstrated- Evidence indicates the tool is valid in the Australian context
- Information unavailable/no research conducted

**Special Needs Groups**

- Poor- Demonstrated to be inequitable
- Good- Demonstrated to be equitable
- Information unavailable/no research conducted

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## **Chapter 1: : Introduction**

### **1.1 The context for this report.**

This report was commissioned on the 8 November, 2005 by the Office of Youth, Department of Communities. The purpose of the report was to evaluate the evidence base for youth justice risk/needs assessment tools and to make recommendations about which of these tools might best meet Queensland's unique needs and current circumstances.

### **1.2 What is an evidence base?**

Evidence-based policy has been defined as an approach that “helps people make well informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation” (Davis, 1999). Importantly, however, it must be recognised that not all research is of the same quality (Davis, Nutley, & Smith, 2000). Evidence-based policy and practice stresses that the research should not only be competently designed and carried out, but that data should support the findings and conclusions. Additionally, there should be a discussion of the methodological limitations of the study that may potentially bias results, indicate alternative explanations or limit the generalisability of the results (Rycus & Hughes, in press). Evidence-based policy requires a systematic approach to search for appropriate evidence, the critical appraisal of studies that are identified, and a balanced understanding of what the research evidence indicates, taking into account both its strengths and weaknesses (Davis et al., 2000).

In recent years there has been a recognition that decision-making in the human services should be guided by evidence derived from scientific research (Gambrill, 1999; Gambrill & Shlonsky, 2000). This push for evidence-based practice arose from the realisation that practitioners did not routinely use the best available evidence for their decisions (R. Borum, 2003; Hoge, 2002; A. Rose, 2003; Wiebush, Baird, Krisberg, & Onek, 1995). Youth justice decision making is no exception to these findings, whereby judgements are often made on the basis of factors which lack empirical support. Furthermore, those variables grounded in empirical evidence are often excluded from the decision making process (R. Borum, 1996; Wiebush et al., 1995).

The following report utilised numerous sources of evidence to elucidate best practice guidelines for risk/needs assessments and the evaluation of such tools in the youth justice field. The sources utilised in this report include: refereed journal articles, conference presentations and proceedings, independent evaluations commissioned by government agencies which were publicly available, and descriptions and evaluations provided by the risk/needs assessment developers and publishers. The most weight was accorded to empirical evidence derived from either quantitative research or surveys, or descriptive or qualitative research that was published in peer-reviewed journals. Peer review is the process through which experts in a field of study assess the quality of articles that are submitted to a journal for publication. Consequently, while the standard of journals vary, this process ensures that all articles published meet the standards for that publication. Conference presentations and proceedings do not meet the same benchmark standards as peer-reviewed journals. However, these reports are available for critical appraisal by the research community. Similarly, independently commissioned evaluation reports funded by governments, and available in the public domain, were also considered to be indicative of an evidence base. Internal government/ organisational reports were included because the description of many of the programs and the implementation of these programs was

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only available through internal reports. Because these reports were generally not subjected to independent critical appraisal, a lesser weight was accorded to them in respect to their contribution to the evidence base. These reports were assessed on the basis of the empirical evidence they presented and the methodological soundness of their research design.

### **1.3 Outline of the report**

In the next Chapter, a range of issues relating to youth justice decision making will be identified. Here, the important attributes of a youth justice risk/needs assessment will be identified. Following this, in Chapter 3 a brief outline of the methodology will be provided which draws on the best practice guidelines outlined in Chapter 2. Finally, the results of the comparative analysis will be presented in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 2: Youth Justice Decision Making

### 2.1 Putting Adolescent Offending into Context

#### 2.1.1 Philosophy of Youth Justice

Youth justice systems serve multiple functions. In Western youth justice systems these functions typically relate to upholding public safety and rehabilitating young offenders (Thompson, 2003). In relation to the former function, the youth justice system aims to protect society from youth crime (Benda, Corwyn, & Toombs, 2001b; Putninš, 2004; Thompson, 2003, 2005). Here, youth justice decisions should focus on issues pertaining to what level of supervision is suitable for youth and what period of supervision is necessary to protect society from further offences (Putninš, 2004). In an attempt to protect public safety, decisions are largely determined on the basis of the nature of the offence perpetrated by the youth and questions of risk. In relation to the second goal, the youth justice system aims to address the criminogenic needs of the offender through intervention programs (Hoge, 2002; Putninš, 2004; Thompson, 2005), this is a welfare-oriented goal. Here, youth justice decisions should focus on issues pertaining to case management and which programs are likely to address the young offender's criminogenic needs (Hoge, 2002). In an attempt to rehabilitate offenders, decisions are largely determined on the basis of the availability of programs and services to address the offender's criminogenic needs.

Risk/needs assessments provide a useful tool for the attainment of both of these goals (Putninš, 2004; Thompson, 2005). To illustrate, the risk component of these assessments aims to identify juveniles who present an elevated risk of recidivism. As a result, if risk predictions are accurate, these tools can guide decisions to maximise community protection by providing graduated sanctions in accordance with estimates of risk. More specifically, greater efforts can be made to protect society from those

who pose a higher risk of recidivism. The needs component of risk/needs assessments aims to identify the criminogenic needs of young offenders so that intervention plans can target areas of criminogenic need in an attempt to rehabilitate youth. In addressing a youth's criminogenic needs, it is anticipated that a youth's likelihood of recidivism will be ameliorated, thus also contributing to the first goal of protecting society from youthful offending.

These aforementioned goals, however, can create tension whereby interventions that protect public safety, such as incapacitation, may not always provide the best environment for rehabilitation. Similarly, an environment which facilitates rehabilitation may not always provide the highest level of public safety. Consequently, these goals need to be balanced and thus present a challenge to youth justice systems. The philosophy of youth justice systems can be better understood in the context of contemporary perceptions of adolescent offending behaviour. This is the focus of the ensuing section.

### **2.1.2 Juvenile Offending as 'Normative' Behaviour**

Research investigating the prevalence of juvenile offending indicates that a large proportion of youth perpetrate at least one delinquent act during adolescence (e.g., Moffitt, 1997; Moffitt, Caspi, Harrington, & Milne, 2002; Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter, & Silva, 2001; Piquero, Brezina, & Turner, 2005; Rutter & H., 1983; Thornberry & Krohn, 2001). In fact, some estimates suggest that the vast majority of adolescents engage in such behaviour on at least one occasion, with rates of involvement of approximately 85% to 90% reported for both males and females (Moffitt et al., 2001; Thornberry & Krohn, 2001). As a result of such findings, Moffitt (1993; 1997) has proposed that juvenile delinquency could be considered normative developmental behaviour.

For the majority of youth, engagement in delinquent acts is transitory, whereby such individuals typically desist as they enter young adulthood (Moffitt, 1993, 1997). These youths have been referred to as ‘adolescent-limited offenders’ (Moffitt, 1993). For a minority of youths, however, offending behaviour is not a transitory developmental period, but rather persists into adulthood (Moffitt, 1993, 1997). These individuals have been referred to as ‘life-course persistent offenders’ (Moffitt, 1993). It has been argued that the differentiation between these two groups of adolescents can have important implications for youth justice services, whereby life-course persistent offenders are likely to require more intensive treatment (Casey & Day, 2004; Catchpole & Gretton, 2003; Day, Howells, & Rickwood, 2003; Moffitt, 1993; Putninš, 2004). Adolescent-limited offenders, on the other hand, are likely to require less intensive interventions.

For adolescent-limited offenders, diversion may be more beneficial as these youths are less likely to recidivate. In fact, contact with the youth justice system has been demonstrated to have a negative impact on youths who pose a low risk of recidivism, increasing the likelihood of future offending (see Day et al., 2003). Consequently, it has been proposed that bringing adolescent-limited offenders into the juvenile justice system can have negative implications for the youth, possibly resulting in a continuation of offending behaviour (Moffitt, 1993). There are a plethora of potential reasons for this effect. To illustrate, involvement in the youth justice system, and especially commitment to secure care, may provide these youths with the opportunity to learn from more serious, chronic offenders. Alternatively, contact with the youth justice system may result in youths being labelled as an offender and thus creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Additionally, becoming entrenched in the youth justice may thwart the availability of alternative prosocial pathways. Despite the explanation adopted to account for the pernicious effect of contact with the youth justice system, this effect has rendered diversion programs, and the provision of cautioning, important components of youth justice policy. Risk/needs assessments may facilitate

this process if those youths who pose a lower risk of recidivism can be diverted from the system. Furthermore, if risk/needs assessments can identify those life-course persistent offenders who present an elevated risk of recidivism, more intensive programs can be provided. Additionally, if their criminogenic needs can be identified, interventions can be tailored to meet these specific needs. Unfortunately, however, at this stage an accurate and reliable method for differentiating life-course persistent offenders from adolescent-limited offenders has not been developed (Day et al., 2003). Despite this, risk/needs assessment can provide some guidance by identifying those youths who are more likely to re-offend and identify their criminogenic needs so that sanctions and interventions can be allocated to youths commensurate with their level of risk and criminogenic needs.

### **2.1.3 Queensland's Legal Context**

Consistent with the above philosophy, the Queensland Juvenile Justice Act ("Juvenile Justice Act," 1992) includes the following principles;

- The community should be protected from offences.
- If a child commits an offence, the child should be treated in a way that diverts the child from the courts' criminal justice system, unless the nature of the offence and the child's criminal history indicate that a proceeding for the offence should be started.
- A child should be detained in custody for an offence, whether on arrest or sentence, only as a last resort and for the least time that is justified in the circumstances.  
("Juvenile Justice Act," 1992, pp. 211-213)

Additionally, one of the objectives of the Juvenile Justice Act (1992) is;

to recognise the importance of families of children and communities, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in the provision of services designed to—

- (i) rehabilitate children who commit offences; and
- (ii) reintegrate children who commit offences into the community.

It is evident from the selected principles of the Juvenile Justice Act (1992) listed above, that the Queensland legislation is consistent with the philosophical ideals discussed previously. As a result, in the Queensland context, risk/needs assessments play an important role in guiding decisions regarding which youth present an elevated risk of recidivism and which criminogenic needs should be targeted in interventions to reduce such risk.

#### **2.1.4 Decision-Making across the Youth Justice System**

Discretionary decisions are made throughout the youth justice process (Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999; Hoge, 2005; Hoge & Andrews, 2002; Thompson & Putninš, 2003). These decisions include:

- Conditional bail assessments
- Pre-court assessments
- Pre-sentence report assessments
- Initial assessments when adolescent offenders are placed on supervision orders
- Re-assessments as a part of ongoing orders and reviews of assessment
- Re-assessment on the completion of orders

Complete accuracy of decision-making in the area of youth justice, or any human services field, is an unrealistic expectation (Hammond, 1996; Munro, 1999). Youth justice case workers are required to make difficult decisions in an environment with high workloads and competing demands (Krysiak & LeCroy, 2002; Young, Moline, Farrell, & Bierie, 2006). The primary task of Youth Justice Case Workers is to assess the likelihood of recidivism and develop a case plan that aims to target criminogenic

needs to prevent such recidivism. The assessment of risk is an assessment of the probability of recidivism. As with all probability assessments, there is always a component of error. These errors can have serious implications for the lives of young offenders (Jung & Rawana, 1999; Young et al., 2006).

### **2.1.5 Understanding human decision making**

There is a substantial body of research which investigates human judgement, decision making and information processing (for reviews see Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1990; Mellers, Schwartz, & Cooke, 1998; Plous, 1993). This research base has indicated that human decision makers typically violate fundamental precepts of rational choice by taking mental short cuts. Perfectly rational decision making would require consideration of all relevant evidence before reaching a decision. A cost/benefit analysis demonstrates that achieving a correct decision is expensive in both time and effort. Consequently, people prefer to find ways of simplifying reasoning by taking shortcuts. That is, they create rules (or heuristics) that reduces difficult judgemental tasks to simpler ones by restricting the amount of information they consider. Employing heuristic shortcuts often minimises effort and provides satisfying solutions that are “good enough”, but not necessarily the best (Mellers et al., 1998). Whilst these rules may suffice in everyday circumstances, they can lead to large and persistent biases with serious implications for decision making in the youth justice system (Hoge, 2002; Kahneman et al., 1990). Unfortunately, research indicates that these biases are relatively common in youth justice services (R. Borum, 2003; Hoge, 2002; Minor, Hartmann, & Terry, 1997; Sanborn, 1996; Schissel, 1993; Wiebush et al., 1995).

Four biases have been identified that have particular relevance to clinicians’ predictions of risk (R. Borum, Otto, & Golding, 1993). First, clinicians tend to under use base rates when predicting events that are uncommon. This leads to a tendency to over estimate the occurrence of an event. Second, confirmatory biases often prevent

clinicians from considering evidence impartially. Here, clinicians search for evidence consistent with the conclusion they believe to be correct, whereby contradictory evidence is either disregarded or re-evaluated. Furthermore, clinicians tend to be overconfident that their premature conclusions are accurate, which further limits their search for disconfirming evidence. Third, illusory correlations have been found to influence clinical predictions. This occurs when two events are seen as being related when they are not related or related to a lesser extent. Lastly, clinicians tend to place too much emphasis on the unique characteristics of a case. This is problematic because it results in clinicians believing similar cases are quite different and that unique characteristics are better predictors than those characteristics that are more common.

The utilisation of cognitive biases has been documented in the criminal justice and human services fields, including the adult justice system, the juvenile justice and the child protection system (e.g., R. Borum, 1996; R. Borum et al., 1993; Cooper & Werner, 1990; Kahneman et al., 1990; Munro, 1999; Sanborn, 1996; Schissel, 1993). Research investigating decision-making by youth justice case workers indicates that professionals with heavy case loads and limited time tend to be selective in the information they use and the way they select this information (e.g., R. Borum, 1996; R. Borum et al., 1993; Cooper & Werner, 1990; Kahneman et al., 1990; Munro, 1999; Sanborn, 1996; Schissel, 1993). Here, professionals tend to base their decisions on factors that lack empirically-derived predictive power, whereby empirically-supported variables are not factored into decision processes (R. Borum, 1996; R. Borum et al., 1993; Cooper & Werner, 1990). According to Wiebush and colleagues (1995, p. 173) “historically, risk assessment and classification have been informal, highly discretionary procedures carried out by individuals who have varying philosophies and different levels of experience and knowledge, and who use dissimilar criteria in the assessment process”. Here, unavoidably, the factors utilised in the assessment, and the manner utilised to combine these factors, vary unsystematically across

professionals and assessment circumstances (R. Borum, 2003; Hoge, 2002; Putninš, 2004). One way to improve juvenile justice practices is to devise strategies that offset biases and errors to which human reasoning is vulnerable. This can be achieved through the utilisation of standardised analytic tools (Casey & Day, 2004; Hoge, 2002).

## **2.2 Clinical versus actuarial decision making**

There are two basic functions in decision making: collecting and interpreting data. There is a long running, divisive debate in the literature concerning the efficacy of two processes of data interpretation. This debate originated with the publication of a book examining clinical versus statistical prediction (Meehl, 1954), however, the same theme has been repeated in the informal (subjective, impressionistic) versus formal (mechanical, algorithmic) debate (Grove & Meehl, 1996), art (practice wisdom) versus science (empirically-based instruments., Cash, 2001) and analytical versus intuitive decision making (Hammond, 1996).

In the clinical method, information is combined or processed in the decision-maker's head. In the actuarial or statistical method, the human judge is eliminated and information is combined or processed using empirically established relations between data and the condition (Dawes, Faust, & Meehl, 1989). An overwhelming amount of research has demonstrated that clinical methods are inconsistent and unreliable (e.g., Rossi et al cited in Gambrill & Shlonsky, 2000; Grove & Meehl, 1996). This inconsistency applies to individual clinicians making predictive decisions on equivalent data and across different clinicians making predictions on the same data (Dawes et al., 1989). A meta analysis of 136 studies, covering more than 50 years of research, compared actuarial and clinical predictions and found only eight studies which favoured clinical predictions. Sixty four studies concluded that the actuarial

method was more accurate and 64 studies found the methods relatively equal in accuracy (cited in Grove & Meehl, 1996). Additionally, actuarial predictions have been found to be more accurate than clinical predictions in over 100 studies conducted across a variety of decision-making contexts (see Dawes et al., 1989; Gambrill & Shlonsky, 2000; Hanson & Bussière, 1998).

In the juvenile justice field, however, there is a paucity of research examining the comparative efficacy of actuarial and clinical decisions (Upperton & Thompson, 2005). In a comparison between actuarial decisions utilising the North Carolina Assessment of Risk (NCAR) and clinical decisions, the NCAR resulted in greater consistency in judgments (Schwalbe, Fraser, Day, & Arnold, 2004). In a study conducted by Krysik and LeCroy (2002), juvenile justice case workers' clinical decisions were identified as possessing greater predictive accuracy than one nine-item risk prediction tool developed by NCCD, but weaker predictive accuracy than an empirically-derived five-item risk prediction formulae. The results of this comparison are difficult to interpret, however, due to several methodological limitations. First, the nine-item risk prediction formulae was characterised by several sources of error, including high rates of missing data and errors in administration and scoring. Second, as workers assessed youth using both the nine-item tool and clinical judgement, the risk estimates determined by the nine-item prediction formulae were available to juvenile justice case workers, thus possibly confounding results. Third, the five-item and nine-item prediction formulae differed qualitatively, whereby the five-item prediction formulae was comprised of four dynamic factors and the nine-item prediction formulae was comprised of static variables associated with juveniles' offences. Consequently, this study could be interpreted as supporting the utilisation of dynamic factors, as opposed to static factors.

More recently, Upperton and Thompson (2005) have compared actuarial decisions utilising the YLS/CMI-AA with clinical judgments. Although the predictive validity

of the YLS/CMI-AA was slightly higher than that of clinical judgements, with AUC indices of .75 and .70 respectively, this difference was non-significant. One difference between the actuarial and clinical classifications, however, was that the YLS/CMI-AA classified more offenders as posing a lower risk, while the clinical judgements classified more offenders as posing a higher risk. Consequently, the YLS/CMI-AA may be superior in regards to avoiding net-widening. This may be particularly important for those offenders that could be considered adolescent-limited offenders using Moffitt's (1993) classification system. Additionally, the predictive power attained for both actuarial and clinical decisions in this study were strong. Furthermore, many of the youth justice officers in both groups of assessors had a substantial amount of experience, ranging from two months to 16 years (for actuarial assessors:  $M = 7.46$ ,  $MDN = 7.50$ ,  $SD = 5.13$ ; for clinical judgement assessors:  $M = 7.06$ ,  $MDN = 6.00$ ,  $SD = 5.35$ ). It is likely that these assessors with many years of experience would be skilful in assessing risk. As a result, it may be those with less experience who benefit more from the utilisation of actuarial assessments. Unfortunately, differences in assessors' years of experience were not examined in this study as a potential mediating factor.

Despite the paucity of research comparing actuarial and clinical decisions in the juvenile justice field, and the inconsistent findings in the existing evidence-base, a growing body of research does suggest that youth justice case workers' clinical judgments are often determined in a biased fashion and are characterised by inaccuracy, inconsistency and a lack of equitability (e.g., R. Borum, 2003; Hoge, 2002; Minor et al., 1997; Sanborn, 1996; Wiebush et al., 1995). Additionally, a separate body of research is accumulating that supports the consistency, accuracy and/or equitability of actuarial decisions in the youth justice field (e.g., K. Baker, Jones, Merrington, & Roberts, 2005; Catchpole & Gretton, 2003; Glaser, Calhoun, & Puder, 2005; Hoge, 2005; Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien, & Furlong, 2004; Krysik & LeCroy, 2002; LeCroy, Krysik, & Palumbo, 1998; Prentky & Righthand, 2003; Putninš, 2004;

Righthand et al., 2005; Schmidt, Hoge, & Gomes, 2005; Schwalbe et al., 2004; Seifert, 2005b; Thompson & Pope, in press; Upperton & Thompson, 2005).

Even in the absence of definitive evidence supporting the superiority of actuarial methods in the youth justice field, actuarial decisions have a number of advantages (see Table 2). To illustrate, actuarial methods are purported to save considerable time and expense (Hoge, 2002; Upperton & Thompson, 2005). Furthermore, actuarial methods are explicit which facilitates informed criticism and are freely available to other members of the scientific community who may wish to replicate or extend research (Hoge, 2002; Thompson, 2005). Decisions guided by risk/needs assessments are also transparent, whereby the factors utilised as a basis for the decision can be easily identified (Thompson, 2005). This promotes accountability and facilitates evaluations of the predictive accuracy of overall decisions, individual items and larger factors (Hoge, 2002; Thompson, 2005). Furthermore, actuarial tools can be useful tools for organising client data and guaranteeing all pertinent variables are considered in the decision-making process (Hoge, 2002; Thompson, 2005). However, it must be realised that while being an improvement on clinical procedures, actuarial procedures are far from infallible, need to be periodically reevaluated and should not be mindlessly applied to new settings (Dawes et al., 1989).

**Table 2: Advantages Associated with Actuarial Risk/Needs Assessments**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. They emerge from a tradition of empirical approaches to predicting future behaviour in criminal justice systems.</li><li>2. They adopt an actuarial approach to prediction that is consistent with a large body of research supporting that strategy.</li><li>3. They incorporate risk factors for juvenile offending that are well established both empirically and theoretically.</li><li>4. They serve as a basis for discriminating between juveniles more or less likely to offend.</li><li>5. They serve as a basis for identifying psychosocial factors that may be modified to reduce the likelihood of offending.</li></ol>
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6. They serve as basis for allocating correctional resources and implementing a sensible correction agenda based on risk and need.
7. They are consistent with key principles and societal expectations declared in juvenile justice legislation.
8. They are transparent and consistent with professional and public standards for verifiability and accountability.

Source: (Upperton & Thompson, 2005, p. 2)

Despite the overwhelming evidence for the superiority of actuarial methods of decision making in the criminal justice field, and the support for the accuracy and consistency of such decisions in the juvenile justice field, there has been substantial reluctance on the part of youth justice case workers to use such methods (e.g., Bonta, Bogue, Crowley, & Mottuk, 2001; Latessa, Cullen, & Gendreau, 2002; Maupin, 1993; Putninš, 2004; Taxman & Marlowe, 2006; Young et al., 2006). Part of this reluctance appears to be the result of the severe polarisation of the debate; that decision making must be either actuarial or clinical. In more recent times a number of compromise positions have been proposed (Doyle & Dolan, 2002; Gambrill & Shlonsky, 2000; W. Johnson, 1996; Monahan, 1996). “Structuring discretion” (Monahan, 1996) is an accepted procedure used to combine actuarial and clinical predictions. In structured discretion, actuarial tools are used as the basis for predictions, however, additional characteristics may also be considered, provided such variables have demonstrated predictive power (R. Borum, 1996). This has been demonstrated empirically to improve the validity of both actuarial and clinical predictions (Douglas, Cox, & Webster, 1999). If unique variables are deemed to be of particular importance, the actuarial prediction may be adjusted at the clinician’s discretion (Clinical Overrides). However, adjustments should not deviate too far from the original prediction. Another alternative is Structured Professional Judgement, whereby although individual items are coded in accordance with empirical evidence, the assessor uses clinical judgement to determine a client’s risk level (R. Borum, 2003). Structured

Professional Judgement has also been demonstrated to be more accurate than clinical judgements (Borum & Douglas, in press cited in R. Borum, 2003).

Given the recognition in the youth justice field of the accuracy and consistency of actuarial models of decision making and the inaccuracies, inconsistencies and lack of equitability of clinical decision making (e.g., R. Borum, 2003; Catchpole & Gretton, 2003; Hoge, 2002; Krysik & LeCroy, 2002; Minor et al., 1997; Sanborn, 1996; Schwalbe et al., 2004; Upperton & Thompson, 2005; Wiebush et al., 1995), it is difficult not to agree with Grove and Meehl's (1996) assertion that to use the less efficient of the two prediction procedures is not only unscientific and irrational, it is also unethical.

## **2.3 Youth Justice Risk/Needs Assessments**

### **2.3.1 What are Risk Assessments?**

The purpose of risk assessment tools is the prediction of the likelihood of *re-offending*. In general terms, a risk assessment tool is a formalised method that provides a uniform structure and a set of criteria for determining risk (Cicchinelli, 1995). This encompasses the risk factors selected for assessment, the coding forms or checklists utilised to capture the assessment, and the procedures and calculations for determining risk (Schene, 1996). Risk assessment tools help decision makers focus on important information and structure clinical thinking.

More specifically, risk assessment tools are comprised of a number of items that aim to appraise a constellation of pertinent risk factors and, in some cases, protective factors. As the term suggests, risk factors are those variables that produce an elevated risk of recidivism, possibly triggering offending behaviour (Douglas et al., 1999; Kropp, Hart, & Lyon, 2002; Kropp, Hart, Lyon, & LePard, 2002; Mullen, Pathe, &

Purcell, 2000). Protective factors, in contrast, are those variables that buffer an individual from engaging in offending behaviour, thus diminishing the risk of recidivism (Kropp, Hart, Lyon et al., 2002; Rogers, 2000). Protective factors may ameliorate risk by mitigating the effects of risk factors; alternatively, protective factors may have an independent effect on recidivism risk (Douglas et al., 1999; Kropp, Hart, Lyon et al., 2002; Rogers, 2000). In order to obtain accurate assessments of risk, it is typically argued that an holistic risk assessment which incorporates both risk and protective factors is required (Rogers, 2000). For juvenile offending, however, very little is known about potential protective factors (Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b). For this reason, although protective factors may be assessed (K. Baker, Jones, Roberts, & Merrington, 2003; Barnoski, 2004; Hoge, 2005; Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004), some assessments exclude these factors from contributing to overall risk/needs scores (e.g., K. Baker et al., 2003; Casey & Day, 2004; Thompson & Pope, in press; Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b).

#### *Static Versus Dynamic Factors*

Risk and protective factors can be divided according to the characteristics of the variable. Risk and protective factors can be either static or dynamic (Randy Borum, Fein, Vossekuil, & Berglund, 1999; Douglas & Kropp, 2002). Static factors, such as age at first offence, cannot change (Randy Borum et al., 1999; Douglas & Kropp, 2002). Dynamic factors, in contrast, can change (Randy Borum et al., 1999; Douglas & Kropp, 2002), such as ADHD-related signs. Dynamic factors can also be referred to as criminogenic needs factors (R. Borum, 2003; Hoge, 2002; Putninš, 2004). Although risk assessment research initially focused on static factors, such a focus resulted in assessments of risk that were irreversible, whereby treatment outcomes could not reduce assessments of risk (Douglas & Kropp, 2002; Rogers, 2000). Similarly, these risk factors did not provide any guidance for intervention strategies. Consequently, in recent years there has been a shift to the investigation of dynamic factors due to their amenability to change and thus their manipulability through

intervention strategies (Becker & Murphy, 1998; Rogers, 2000; Silver, Mulvey, & Monahan, 1999). As will become apparent, many youth justice risk assessments still predominantly focus on static risk factors (**see Appendix A**).

### **2.3.2 What are Needs Assessments?**

As the name suggests, needs assessments provide a uniform structure for appraising an individual's criminogenic needs (R. Borum, 2003). Criminogenic needs are those factors empirically associated with offending behaviour that are amenable to change (Hoge, 2002). Needs assessment tools are comprised of items that aim to evaluate a number of dynamic criminogenic factors that, if targeted for intervention, can reduce the likelihood of recidivism (Day et al., 2003; Hoge, 2002; Putninš, 2004). Consequently, unlike risk assessments comprised of static risk factors, needs assessments can guide intervention strategies (R. Borum, 2003; Hoge, 2002). In recent years, youth justice assessment tools have been developed that appraise both risks and needs; *risk/needs assessment tools*.

### **2.3.3 Evolution of Decision-Making in the Youth Justice Field**

An evolution in thought regarding the aforementioned issues of actuarial versus clinical decision-making, and the inclusion of dynamic as opposed to static risk factors, has resulted in an associated evolution of risk assessment practices in the criminal justice and youth justice fields. First generation risk assessments derive risk predictions based on clinical judgements (Benda et al., 2001b; Bonta, 1996; Putninš, 2004). As these risk assessments rely on unstructured clinical judgement, the resultant decisions are flawed with the same limitations that were discussed previously in the clinical-actuarial debate. To reiterate, decisions vary in accordance with youth justice case workers' preferred method for gathering, considering, combining and weighting data (Benda et al., 2001b; Bonta, 1996; Putninš, 2004). First generation risk

assessments are unstandardised and unstructured and yield decisions utilising a method that lacks evidence for its reliability and validity (Putninš, 2004). Although first generation risk assessments are capable of accounting for the idiosyncrasies of young offenders' cases, the idiosyncrasies and biases of the youth justice case worker also influence judgements of risk. Despite these limitations, first generation risk assessments are frequently utilised in the youth justice field (Putninš, 2004; Young et al., 2006).

Second generation risk assessments are those comprised of empirically-derived static risk factors (Bonta, 1996; Putninš, 2004). Second generation risk assessments have several advantages over first generation risk assessments. First, these assessments ensure that static factors with demonstrated empirical evidence are utilised to make decisions (Putninš, 2004; Young et al., 2006). Second, as these risk assessments are standardised, they facilitate greater consistency across assessors (Putninš, 2004; Young et al., 2006). Third, decisions made using second generation risk assessments are transparent (Bonta, 1996; Putninš, 2004). Despite these advantages, second generation risk assessments have important limitations. In the absence of dynamic risk factors (or criminogenic needs), changes in a young offender's life or treatment gains cannot reduce assessments of risk (Douglas & Kropp, 2002; Putninš, 2004; Rogers, 2000). Similarly, for those young offender's identified as posing a high risk of recidivism, without an assessment of criminogenic needs, second generation risk assessments provide no guidance for intervention strategies to ameliorate such risk (Putninš, 2004; Young et al., 2006). Consequently, clinical judgement needs to be adopted for the investigation of dynamic risk factors, confined by the limitations of clinical decision-making (Young et al., 2006). Nevertheless, second generation risk assessments are widely adopted in the youth justice field (see Appendix A., Putninš, 2004; Young et al., 2006).

Third generation risk assessments build upon the limitations of second generation risk assessments, with the inclusion of items addressing dynamic risk factors or criminogenic needs (Putninš, 2004). With the inclusion of these items, third generation risk assessments guide intervention strategies to ameliorate such risk by addressing empirically-driven criminogenic needs (Putninš, 2004; Young et al., 2006). Furthermore, changes in a young offender's life or treatment gains can be evaluated in re-assessments (Douglas & Kropp, 2002; Putninš, 2004; Rogers, 2000). The ability to track changes in risk/needs scores across time through the utilisation of re-assessments is important. As adolescence is characterised by great changes in all aspects of ones' development, risk and needs factors may also change over time (R. Borum, 2003). Consequently, these changes need to be monitored, and interventions and assessments of risk changed accordingly. While third generation risk assessments represent a marked improvement over second generation risk assessments, principles of best practice case management have resulted in a recent advancement of risk assessments to also include responsivity factors. Such risk assessments are referred to as fourth generation risk assessments (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2006; Bonta, 1996).

Fourth generation risk assessments encompass all of the elements of third generation risk assessments, with the addition of responsivity factors (Andrews et al., 2006; Putninš, 2004). Responsivity factors are different from both risk factors and criminogenic needs. These factors pertain to variables that may have an impact on the how the young offender responds to treatment or interventions. Responsivity factors are those "...factors that could influence how interventions might be best delivered taking into account individual differences..." (Putninš, 2004, p. 11). Examples of responsivity factors include intellectual functioning, gender, age, mental health, physical health and ethnicity (Andrews et al., 2006; Day et al., 2003; Young et al., 2006). Despite widespread support for third and fourth generation risk assessments by researchers, and advocacy for the adoption of fourth generation risk assessments

by experts in the juvenile justice field, first and second generation risk assessments predominate youth justice practices (Putninš, 2004; Young et al., 2006).

## **2.4 Risk/Needs Assessment And The Reduction Of Recidivism**

In isolation, risk/needs assessment tools cannot reduce recidivism. There is a need for these tools to be tied to practice. Good risk/needs assessments should help staff to direct services and design outcome-oriented case plans (English & Pecora, 1994). It is important that these tools provide a platform for making decisions regarding the relative priorities for service delivery. It is through the integration of risk/needs assessments and good practice that these tools function to maximise recidivism reduction (Day, Howells, & Rickwood, 2004). More specifically, when risk/needs assessments drive appropriate interventions, a subsequent reduction in recidivism can be achieved. Although risk/needs assessments play a vital role in this process (Day et al., 2003), it is the interventions that target criminogenic needs that prevent a young offender from recidivating (Day et al., 2003, 2004). In fact, in a review including more than 200 studies, the most effective interventions achieved reductions in recidivism of up to 40% (Lipsey & Wilson, 1998 cited in Day et al., 2003).

In order to maximise reductions in recidivism best practice guidelines for offender rehabilitation should be adhered to. These guidelines include five key principles, which have been empirically demonstrated to provide a structure within which interventions can be delivered to maximise reductions in recidivism in both adults (Lowenkamp, Latessa, & Holsinger, 2006; Marlowe, Festinger, Lee, Dugosh, & Benasutti, 2006; Taxman & Thanner, 2006) and young offenders (Dowden & Andrews, 1999b). These principles include: the risk principle, the needs principle, the responsivity principle, professional discretion principle and program integrity principle (see Table 3) (Andrews & Bonta, 1998). Although risk/needs assessment

tools are an integral component of the “what works” approach, these tools influence recidivism rates indirectly through their integration with the case management framework whereby these tools guide service delivery. Each of the five principles of case management will be elaborated on in the following section and subsequently used to provide a framework for discussing major issues pertinent to youth justice risk/needs assessments.

**Table 3: : 'What works' principles for effective offender rehabilitation**

<p><i>The risk principle</i></p>	<p>Published research identifies variables associated with the likelihood of an individual reoffending. These risk principles include those not amenable to intervention (<i>static</i> risk factors), and those that might change over time (<i>dynamic</i> risk factors). Static risk factors include age of onset of crime, offence history and family structure. Research suggests that higher risk offenders will benefit the most from rehabilitation interventions and that the intensiveness of services delivered should be proportional to the level of risk.</p>
<p><i>The needs principle</i></p>	<p>The term 'criminogenic needs' refers to risk factors that are dynamic or amenable to change through intervention. The needs principle suggests interventions should target needs of this sort, as they are most directly related to recidivism. Examples of criminogenic needs that form important targets for intervention with young offenders are drug and alcohol use, anger and violence problems, and beliefs or attitudes that support offending.</p>
<p><i>The responsivity principle</i></p>	<p>The responsivity principle focuses on client and program characteristics that influence the offender's ability to learn in a therapeutic situation. Treatment is a learning experience and individual factors that interfere with, or facilitate, learning are termed responsivity</p>

	factors. These factors can also be understood as contextual variables, which may influence treatment outcome. These variables make a difference to the skills, strategies or identities that individuals develop and to the support available when transitions are made. Factors such as age, ethnicity, gender, disability and socioeconomic status can be considered key responsivity factors.
<i>The integrity principle</i>	In contrast to the demands made by the responsivity principle to individualise interventions, an important component of quality assurance is to emphasise the need for program integrity. Program integrity refers to the extent to which an intervention program is delivered in practice as intended in theory and design.
<i>The professional discretion principle</i>	The principle of professional discretion allows for professionals to make decisions on characteristics and situations not covered by the preceding principles. It makes sense to build scope for professional judgment into any rehabilitation system, rather than rely upon rigid administration of static principles.

Source: Day, Howells and Rickwood (2004, p. 2)

### 2.4.1 Risk Principle

The risk principle purports that intervention programs will be more beneficial for individuals who pose a higher risk of recidivism, compared with their lower risk counterparts (Day et al., 2003; Jung & Rawana, 1999). Consequently, it is argued that interventions strategies should target those offenders who pose elevated risks of recidivism (Andrews et al., 2006; Jung & Rawana, 1999; Lowenkamp et al., 2006). Those offenders who pose a low risk of recidivism, on the other hand, should receive “low level programs/case management or even no rehabilitation program” (Casey & Day, 2004, p. 4). Furthermore, levels of supervision and services should be targeted

according to the level of risk posed by a client, whereby the intensity of services and supervision should be commensurate with risk levels (Casey & Day, 2004; Day et al., 2003; Schmidt et al., 2005); with more intensive services reserved for higher risk offenders. In short, the risk principle advocates both graduated sanctions and interventions. This principle is supported by a body of research which suggests that intervention programs are more effective with high risk offenders, in comparison to their lower risk counterparts (Dowden & Andrews, 1999b; Taxman & Thanner, 2006). The differential impact of treatment programs in accordance with offender risk levels has been empirically supported for both adult (Andrews & Dowden, 1999; Andrews et al., 1990; Dowden & Andrews, 1999a, 2000; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998) and juvenile offenders (Hoge & Andrews, 2002 cited in Andrews et al., 2006; Dowden & Andrews, 1999b).

The risk principle is also supported by the fact that for the majority of young offenders, delinquency is short-lived, whereby desistance occurs naturally and without interventions (Cain, 1996; Moffitt, 1993, 1997). Furthermore, it is argued that a minority of young offenders are responsible for a disproportionate amount of juvenile crime (Howell, 1997 cited in R. Borum, 2003). Consequently, intensive interventions should be reserved for those chronic offenders who represent an ongoing risk (Day et al., 2003; Lowenkamp et al., 2006; Putninš, 2004). In fact, research investigating interventions with adult offenders has indicated that the provision of more intensive services for those who pose a low risk of recidivism can actually have a pernicious effect, increasing the rates of recidivism in this group (Andrews et al., 1990). As risk/needs assessments provide a basis from which to estimate an offender's likelihood of recidivism (R. Borum, 2003; Day et al., 2003), the utilisation of valid risk/needs assessments are pertinent for the successful operation of this principle.

### **2.4.2 Needs Principle**

The needs principle proposes that treatment interventions should address an offenders' criminogenic needs (R. Borum, 2003; Casey & Day, 2004; Day et al., 2003, 2004; Hoge, 2002; Putninš, 2004). Here, criminogenic needs are contrasted with non-criminogenic needs, whereby criminogenic needs are demonstrably associated with risks of offending and non-criminogenic needs are not (R. Borum, 2003). This is supported by research which suggests that interventions that target non-criminogenic needs are largely ineffective (Romig, 1978 cited in R. Borum, 2003; Putninš, 2004). Interventions addressing criminogenic needs, however, have been associated with reduced levels of recidivism (Dowden & Andrews, 1999b; Putninš, 2004). Re-assessments of needs are also important due to the fact that young offenders' needs may vary overtime due to life changes, changes in circumstances and developmental changes (R. Borum, 2003). Consequently, intervention plans can be adjusted accordingly. Importantly, when a young offender is sentenced to secure care, however, "...the state is acting *in loco parentis* and has a duty of care for the general welfare of such youths" (Putninš, 2004, p. 8). In these circumstances, non-criminogenic needs should be addressed, although they are likely to have little effect on recidivism reduction (Day et al., 2003; Putninš, 2004). As risk/needs assessments provide a basis from which to identify an offender's criminogenic needs (R. Borum, 2003; Day et al., 2003; Putninš, 2004), the utilisation of valid risk/needs assessments are also essential for the successful operation of this principle. One criminogenic need that requires elaboration is mental health issues. This will be discussed in a subsequent section together with responsivity factors.

### **2.4.3 Responsivity Principle**

The responsivity principle postulates that factors that may impinge on a clients' amenability to treatment should be assessed and taken into consideration in the provision of treatment (Day et al., 2003; Hoge, 2002). These responsivity factors

provide a contextual framework for a clients' case, whereby the efficacy of interventions may be influenced by these variables. Consequently, it may be necessary to modify interventions in accordance with responsivity factors (Putninš, 2004). Examples of responsivity factors include cognitive style, motivation and learning style (Hoge, 2002; Putninš, 2004). Putninš (2004, p. 10) illustrates responsivity factors well by explaining that "there is little point in putting a youth in a program that requires reading if the youth is illiterate". Special needs groups can be considered responsivity factors, whereby characteristics of special needs groups may result in differential receptivity to treatment (Day et al., 2003; Putninš, 2004). Special needs groups will be elaborated on in a subsequent section (see Section 2.8). One particularly important responsivity factors pertains to offenders' mental health.

#### *Mental Health Problems*

Mental health problems are prevalent in the young offender population. To illustrate, in Queensland secure care, 66% of young offenders were estimated as suffering from mental health problems as assessed by the Symptom Checklist-90-Revised (Lennings & Pritchard, 1998 cited in Lennings, 2003). Similar rates were also estimated for young offenders in the United States, with rates between 46% and 81% reported for young offenders in secure care and rates between 25% to 77% for those who were not in secure care (Hagell, 2002). In relation to specific diagnoses, elevated rates of conduct disorder, substance abuse and affective disorders have been documented in the United States young offender population (Grisso, 1999). However, the relationship between mental health needs and risk/needs assessments, is complicated. Mental health factors can be classified as both a criminogenic need or responsivity factor.

If a mental health problem has a causal relationship with offending, it can be considered a criminogenic need. Kenny and Vecchiato (2003 cited in Lennings, 2003) reported a significant association between mental health problems and juvenile offending when mental health problems were assessed using the Adolescent

Psychopathology Scale. If a mental health problems constitute a criminogenic need, interventions addressing such mental health problems could be hypothesised to ameliorate recidivism risk. ADHD signs, for example, have been empirically demonstrated to predict recidivism (Putninš, 2004). A significant relationship between substance abuse and recidivism has also been documented (Cottle, Lee, & Heilbrun, 2001). Consequently, interventions that address these mental health issues should, in theory, result in a reduction in recidivism. Importantly, however, the relationship between mental health issues and offending is complicated and may differ across individuals and diagnoses (Day et al., 2003). Despite this, numerous mental health problems, and especially conduct disorder, substance abuse and ADHD, are likely to constitute a criminogenic need for young offenders (Day et al., 2003; Lennings, 2003). These mental health problems are those most frequently assessed in risk/needs assessments (e.g., Hoge, 2005; Putninš, 2004; Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005a; Youth Justice Board, 2003b). Despite evidence supporting mental health problems as a criminogenic need, few risk/needs assessments comprehensively evaluate these factors. One exception to this is the ASSET, which includes a mental health component.

Mental health issues can also impact a clients' amenability for treatment. Under these circumstances, mental health issues constitute a responsivity factor. Mental health issues can influence treatment efficacy in different ways, depending on the nature of the mental health problem. In regards to ADHD, for example, Putnins (2004, p. 10) states that "there is little point in putting a youth in a program that requires...sitting still and paying attention if the youth suffers ADHD". Furthermore, Day and colleagues (2003, p. ) state that;

Offenders with mental health needs present considerable difficulties to services. These have been described by Hafemeister, Hall & Dvoskin (2001) and include administrative

challenges related to ensuring the safety of both the individual offender and those around her/him, the demands made upon staff and the impact on staff morale, and the difficulties in providing offence-focused interventions with this group (see Howells, Day & Thomas-Peter, 2002 for further discussion). In addition, there are management issues related to housing, disciplinary segregation, and residential treatment, and there are often disagreements about whose responsibility it is to provide services to this group.

Unfortunately, in the presence of an overwhelming number of mental health problems in young offenders, there is a paucity of research examining the efficacy of intervention programs for youths with mental health problems (Day et al., 2003). Consequently, there is a need for more research to be conducted that evaluates the efficacy of intervention programs for young offenders with mental health problems. This will facilitate the delivery of programs that are sensitive to the needs of young offenders with mental health problems and thus will be more effective.

#### **2.4.4 Program Integrity Principle**

The program integrity principle purports that an intervention should be “delivered in practice as intended in theory and design” (Day et al., 2003, p. 4). Here, the delivery of interventions should be in accordance with intervention protocols or treatment manuals and delivered by a trained professional. This promotes consistency and treatment success (Day et al., 2003). Related to this principle, the integrity of the administration of risk/needs assessments is also important and will be discussed in a subsequent section.

#### **2.4.5 Professional Discretion Principle**

The principle of professional discretion “allows for professionals to make decisions on the basis of other characteristics and situations not covered by the preceding

principles” (Day et al., 2003, p. 4). The inclusion of this principle provides scope for professionals to consider factors that may have important implications for offending risk but which may not be included in risk/needs assessments (Day et al., 2003; Putninš, 2004), or in other words, the use of a professional override. These factors may be excluded from risk/needs assessments for a variety of reasons, such as the rarity of occurrence of such factors. Consequently, the professional discretion principle enables the consideration of these important, but unique, variables whereby risk scores may be adjusted accordingly. Putnin (2004, p. 162) illustrates this point with the following example; “a youth is assessed to be at high risk of robbery with violence, but at the time of his last robbery he suffered an injury. He is now able to only walk slowly and will not be able to run for another year (being able to run is an important prerequisite for most of his crimes as this is how he leaves the scene and avoids apprehension). Would, at least for the next year, the youth’s recidivism risk not be reduced?”

Importantly, the use of professional overrides need to be monitored, justified and evaluated as they can undermine the predictive validity and consistency of risk/needs assessments. In fact, existing research indicates that the utilisation of professional overrides does not improve the consistency or validity of risk/need scores (see Goldberg, 1968., Sawyer, 1966 & Barton, 1997 cited in Putninš, 2004). Therefore, while professional overrides serve an important role, strict practice guidelines need to be developed and enforced.

#### **2.4.6 Summary**

Risk/needs assessments cannot reduce recidivism in isolation. However, risk/needs assessments can identify an offender’s level of risk, criminogenic needs and responsivity factors; referred to as the risks, needs and responsivity concept. These factors can, in turn, drive the delivery of appropriate, efficacious interventions

through adherence to the five principles of effective offender rehabilitation. As a result, subsequent reductions in recidivism can be achieved.

## **2.5 Risk/Needs Assessments And The Quality Of Juvenile Justice Systems**

Risk/needs assessments can improve the quality of the youth justice system by reducing recidivism through its integral role in “what works” principles of effective offender rehabilitation. Importantly, however, risk prediction and case management functions are not the only roles of risk/needs assessments. Risk/needs assessments also provide a basis from which important data can be collected. The collection of such data can be utilised to evaluate programs and identify clients’ service needs (Day et al., 2003). If such data is used effectively, it can facilitate a better understanding the client base, their associated needs and, in turn, drive policy and programming decisions. Such data collection is facilitated by ensuring risk/needs assessment tools are embedded in administrative databases or information management systems (Day et al., 2003). English, Bradford and Coghlan (2000) identified that these databases have the ability to examine policy-relevant questions on a longitudinal as well as a cross-sectional basis and to enhance an organisation’s ability to meet expectations of accountability. The utilisation of databases also enhances the accuracy of the data collected, results in faster processing of assessments, provides a mechanism for monitoring assessments for quality assurance purposes and allows changes to be made to scoring algorithms using the back-end of the database with minimal disruption to daily practices (Young et al., 2006). These benefits can contribute to improvements in the quality of risk/needs assessments and data collection, and therefore improvements in the quality of the youth justice system as a whole.

Together, risk/needs assessments can improve the quality of youth justice systems through (1) assessing offenders’ risks, needs and responsivity factors to provide the

most appropriate sanctions and services to offenders and (2) facilitate the collection of important data that can be utilised to ensure the efficacy of interventions and ensure youth justice services meet clients' needs.

## **2.6 Development Of Risk/Needs Assessments**

The effectiveness of risk/needs assessments is contingent on how these tools are developed and the information they include. Risk/needs assessment models have been divided into two types based on the way the model was developed; consensus or empirically derived (Cicchinelli, 1995). Consensus-based tools consist of those tools in which the risk items or factors included were selected on the basis of a process other than empirical research (Ryan, Wiles, Cash, & Siebert, 2005) Consensus models generally rely on professional agreement about which variables or conditions are most highly associated with recidivism. Well developed consensus models can improve accuracy and consistency of data collection because they systemise the assessment criteria and are backed by at least some research. However, these tools are not subjected to rigorous pre-testing and there is no evidence to dictate how various factors interact or how they should be weighted. In fact, most have no numerical scoring systems (W. Johnson, 1996).

Empirically derived risk assessment tools are actuarial tools that incorporate criteria which have been demonstrated, through prior statistical assessment, to have high association with future maltreatment (Cash, 2001). In general, actuarial risk assessment models have repeatedly demonstrated superior reliability, validity and performance over consensus models in accurately predicting recidivism. It is true that some consensus models outperform unaided clinical judgement, however, no consensus model has achieved the reliability and validity of empirically based or actuarial models. To improve youth justice decision making, however, it is important

that the empirically-derived risk assessment tools possess good psychometric properties.

## **2.7 Psychometric Properties**

In order to achieve reductions in recidivism and improve the quality of the youth justice system, the risk/needs assessments adopted must possess sound psychometric properties. Despite the existence of a preponderance of risk assessments in the youth justice field, many risk assessments have not been validated (LeBlanc, 1998; Taxman & Marlowe, 2006; Towberman, 1992b). Similarly, many of the needs assessments that have been developed and implemented in the youth justice field have no known psychometric properties (Towberman, 1992a). The absence of psychometric properties for risk and/or needs assessments is problematic as, without such data, the consistency and accuracy of decisions made on the basis of these tools is unknown. As a direct consequence of this, the ability of the tool to reduce recidivism or improve the quality of the youth justice system cannot be estimated. As the decisions of youth justice case workers have a significant impact on young offenders' futures, it is important that risk/needs assessment tools used to guide these decisions are psychometrically sound. Evidence of the psychometric properties of a tool can be divided into two areas: reliability and validity.

### **2.7.1 Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency or stability of empirical indicators from measurement to measurement. A reliable instrument yields the same results on repeated measures. This is important as a lack of consistency would indicate that assessments would differ across young offenders, preventing equitable decision making. Table 4 summarises a number of reliability measurements.

**Table 4: Types of Reliability**

Type of Reliability	Description	Statistical Procedures
Inter-rater reliability	Consistency of decision making across different raters. Determined by having two or more observers watching the same event and independently recording the variables according to a pre-determined coding system.	Cohen's Kappa ranges from 0 – 1.00 with a value above 0.5 being considered satisfactory (Baird, Wagner, Healy, & Johnson, 1999). Intra-Class Correlation (ICC) → scores above .75 are excellent; scores between .4 to .75 are fair and scores below .4 are poor (Skeem & Cauffman, 2003).
Test-retest reliability	Measures the temporal stability of assessment scores	Reliability co-efficient → Acceptable reliability coefficients for test-retest reliability is usually .80 (Gregory, 2000)
Internal Consistency	Measures the degree to which the items on an assessment correlate with each other, or are internally consistent	Cronbach's alpha's range from 0 – 1.00, with a benchmark of .6 for acceptable internal consistency (Schmidt et al., 2005). Values above 0.7 are considered good. Values above .8 are considered very good (C. C. Rose, Glaser, Calhoun, & Bates, 2004).

### 2.7.2 Validity

Validity refers to whether the instrument does what it is meant to do. This is important because if a tool does not measure or predict the criterion it is designed to measure, not only will its use result in inaccurate decisions, but it would be unethical to use. Table 5 summarises a number of validity measurements. Most of the research on the validity of risk assessment tools has focused on predictive validity. The primary criterion for assessing predictive validity is recidivism. What constitutes recidivism can vary, typically including criteria such as proven offences, new police

contact, supervision violations, new placements, new complaints, new charges or new criminal convictions. The types of offences included may also differ, whereby offences may include all re-offending or be limited to felony offences, violent offences or sexual offences. Furthermore, status offences may be included or excluded. Additionally, recidivism may be measured by occurrence, frequency, sentences or seriousness.

How recidivism is measured may also differ. Research relying on official statistics is limited as this data is likely to underestimate the prevalence of re-offending due to underreporting and attrition rates across the youth justice system. Self-reports, however, are also limited in that they rely on the honesty of the young offender.

Despite the limitations of the data, research examining the predictive validity of risk/needs assessment tools does provide some measure of the accuracy of the tools. Despite the existence of a preponderance of risk assessments in the youth justice field, many risk assessments have not been validated (LeBlanc, 1998; Taxman & Marlowe, 2006; Towberman, 1992b). Furthermore, the findings regarding the predictive validity of risk assessments are also mixed. The extent to which this is a reflection of the differing methods used to define and measure recidivism is unknown.

**Table 5: Types of Validity**

Type of Validity	Description	How the it is Measured
Predictive Validity	The degree of accuracy to which the assessment can predict recidivism in the future (Gregory, 2000).	ROC AUC (measures the predictive accuracy taking into account base rates). Scoring: .5 = no association .6 - .7 moderate association .7 or above = strong association 1= perfect association (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004).  Correlation coefficients- needs to be significant. Can range between -1 to +1. Validity coefficients equal to or above .3 or equal to or below -.3 are considered more than respectable (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004).
Concurrent Validity	The degree of accuracy to which the assessment can estimate the criterion using a current outcome (Gregory, 2000). Correlations between scores on risk/needs assessments that assess the same criterion can be utilised as concurrent validity (Gregory, 2000).	Correlation coefficients- needs to be significant. Can range between -1 to +1. Validity coefficients equal to or above .3 or equal to or below -.3 are considered more than respectable (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004).
Discriminant Validity	The degree to which scores on the risk	Correlation coefficients- needs to be significant.

	assessment are not correlated with variables or other risk/needs assessments that it should not correlate with (Gregory, 2000).	Can range between -1 to +1. Validity coefficients equal to or above .3 or equal to or below -.3 are considered more than respectable (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004).
Convergent Validity	The degree to which scores on the risk assessment are correlated with variables or other risk/needs assessments that it should correlate with (Gregory, 2000).	Correlation coefficients- needs to be significant. Can range between -1 to +1. Validity coefficients equal to or above .3 or equal to or below -.3 are considered more than respectable (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004).

### 2.7.3 Sensitivity and Specificity

To determine the accuracy of a risk assessment instrument in predicting recidivism, risk scales are typically subjected to analyses of sensitivity and specificity. Sensitivity refers to the risk instrument's accuracy in correctly identifying those youth who actually recidivate. In a 100% sensitive risk matrix, high-risk ratings occur only for those youth who recidivate, that is, for the true positive cases. Specificity refers to a risk instrument's capacity to identify those youth who are unlikely to recidivate. In a 100% specific risk matrix, low risk scores occur for youth who do not re-offend, that is, true negative cases. Of greater concern than test sensitivity and specificity are the error rates to be expected if the test is actually used in a screening program. False positive cases are diagnostic false alarms. A less than perfect specific test falsely classifies some youth who do not present a risk of recidivating. False negatives cases

are test misses that result in recidivism for youths who receive minimal sanctions and less intensive or no intervention programs.

#### **2.7.4 The Importance of Re-Norming**

It is essential that risk/needs assessments are re-normed when a tool is implemented in a new jurisdiction. This is pertinent as score distributions may differ across jurisdictions, influencing which cut-points should be allocated to different risk ratings. The failure to re-norm a tool can compromise the validity of a tool. Despite this, local re-norming is not undertaken in many youth justice jurisdictions (Hannah-Moffat & Maurutto, 2003; Hubbard, Travis & Latessa, 2001 cited in Putninš, 2005a). The pertinence of re-norming risk/needs assessments has been illustrated in several studies that indicated that prior to re-norming, the validity of risk/needs assessments can be compromised (e.g., Flores, Travis, & Latessa, 2003; Hoge, 2005). However, once tests were re-normed, the validity of the tests were, again, supported (e.g., Flores, Travis, & Latessa, 2003). Consequently, it is essential that the adoption of any risk/needs assessment tool encompasses local re-norming.

#### **2.7.5 Re-validation of risk/needs assessment tools**

It is essential that risk/needs assessment tools are revalidated on data collected in the jurisdiction within which the tool is being adopted. Much of the research examining risk factors and the efficacy of risk/needs assessments is based on data collected in the USA or Canada. For these risk/needs assessment tools, there is no evidence regarding how these tools will translate to the Queensland jurisdiction. Importantly, as the validity of tools cannot be assumed across jurisdictions, re-validation is pertinent (see Ashford & LeCroy, 1988, 1990). Even for those tools developed in Australia, differences in the youth justice populations across states may result in differences in the accuracy of these tools. Consequently, these tools need to be re-

validated upon implementation in the Queensland youth justice population. Without re-validation, the validity of the risk/needs assessment tool is compromised. Despite this, local re-validation is not undertaken in many youth justice jurisdictions (Hannah-Moffat & Maurutto, 2003; Hubbard, Travis & Latessa, 2001 cited in Putninš, 2005a). As a result, it is essential that the adoption of any risk/needs assessment tool encompasses local re-validation.

## **2.8 Risk/Needs Assessments And Special Needs Groups**

Risk/needs assessment tools may possess differing degrees of accuracy and consistency across special needs groups. Consequently, there is a need to validate risk/needs assessments for special needs groups (Jung & Rawana, 1999). Three special needs groups commonly identified in relation to youth justice risk/needs assessments are young adolescents, females and ethnic minority groups.

### **2.8.1 Age**

Throughout out the preceding discussion, a differentiation has been made between adolescent offenders who engage in delinquent behaviour as a part of a transitory developmental stage and those chronic offenders who are likely to continue offending. This distinction is consistent with Moffitt's (1993) adolescent-limited and life-course persistent offender classifications. One way to distinguish between these offending groups is on a basis of age. Life-course persistent offenders are likely to begin offending at a younger age than their adolescent-limited counterparts (Moffitt, 1993, 1997). Consequently, it could be that younger offenders (typically 10 to 14 years) are qualitatively different from many of the older adolescent offenders (often 15 to 20 years), whereby these younger offenders pose an elevated risk of recidivism and possess special needs (Cottle et al., 2001; Day et al., 2003). Consistent with this notion, some risk/needs assessments yield different risk/needs scores in accordance

with the age of the offender (e.g., the VONIY., Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005a). For those risk/needs assessments that do not yield different risk/needs scores commensurate with a young offenders' age, the validity of the tool needs to be demonstrated for both younger and older adolescent offenders.

The differential predictive validity of numerous youth justice risk/needs tools have been examined across age. Despite the potential for qualitative differences across age, these tools have typically yielded accurate predictions for both younger and older offenders (e.g., K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker et al., 2003; Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004). In addition to the potential for younger offenders to pose an elevated risk of recidivism, these offenders may also be characterised by different criminogenic needs that should be targeted to reduce recidivism risk. Furthermore, age could also be considered a responsivity factor, whereby younger and older offenders may respond differently to interventions due to developmental differences and variations in intellectual and cognitive functioning (Day et al., 2003). As a result, age should be considered both a criminogenic need factor and a responsivity factor. Consequently, risk/needs assessments should be validated across age and treatment interventions should also be evaluated across age.

### **2.8.2 Sex**

The notion that risk/needs assessments may differ across sex is often debated. Here, it is argued that risk factors for young female offenders may differ from those of young male offenders (Day et al., 2003; Funk, 1999). In addition, young female offenders may possess different criminogenic needs than their male counterparts (Day et al., 2003; Funk, 1999; Jung & Rawana, 1999). If these arguments are warranted, the accuracy of risk/needs assessments may be impeded for female offenders if they have not been validated in this population (Funk, 1999; Odgers, Moretti, & Reppucci, 2005). Consequently, some risk/needs assessments have been

developed for only male or female offenders (see Levene, Augimeri, & Pepler, 2004; Nichols and Molinder, 2005a; Nichols and Molinder, 2005b; Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b). Additionally, the developer of one risk/needs assessment, the SECAPS, is considering adjusting the tool to yield different risk/needs scores in accordance with the sex of the young offender (Putnins, personal communication, 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2006).

Despite this, a meta-analysis conducted by Simourd and Andrews (1994) of criminogenic risk/need factors yielded similar levels of predictive power across sex. Nevertheless, for those risk/needs assessments that do not yield different risk/needs scores commensurate with a young offenders' sex, the validity of the tool needs to be demonstrated for both male and female offenders. Despite the potential for differences across sex, a number of risk/needs assessment tools have yielded accurate predictions for both male and female offenders (e.g., K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker et al., 2003; Flores et al., 2003; Gavazzi, Yarcheck, & Lim, 2005; Jimerson, Sharkey, Furlong, & O'Brien, 2004; Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004; Jung & Rawana, 1999; Putninš, 2005a; Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004). Importantly, however, this is not consistent across all studies (Schmidt, Hoge & Robertson, 2002 cited in Hoge, 2005; Schmidt et al., 2005). Sex should also be examined as a responsivity factor, with interventions evaluated across sex (Day et al., 2003). In sum, both risk/needs assessments and intervention programs should be validated for both males and females.

### **2.8.3 Ethnicity**

The validity of risk/needs assessments may also differ as a function of ethnicity. Here, it is argued that those risk/needs assessments that were constructed and validated on Caucasian young offenders may not generalise to Non-Caucasian offenders (Jung & Rawana, 1999). More specifically, it is postulated that risk factors may differ across

ethnic groups (Day et al., 2003; Jung & Rawana, 1999). In addition, different ethnic groups may be characterised by different criminogenic needs (Day et al., 2003; Jung & Rawana, 1999) and respond to intervention programs differently. Consequently, risk/needs assessments need to be validated across ethnic groups. The evaluation of the predictive validity of risk/needs assessments across ethnicity has yielded mixed results. While the accuracy of some risk/needs tools have been supported across ethnic groups (e.g., K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker et al., 2003; Flores et al., 2003; Jung & Rawana, 1999; Putninš, 2005a; Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004), the accuracy of other risk/needs tools have been demonstrated to vary as a function of ethnicity (e.g., Schwalbe et al., 2004). Importantly, however, the majority of this research has compared the validity of youth justice risk/needs assessments for Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders in Canada and the United States.

Limited Australian research was found that examines the use of youth justice risk/needs assessment tools with young Indigenous Australian offenders. Currently, Indigenous Australian youths are over-represented in the youth justice system (Day et al., 2003). To illustrate, Indigenous Australian youths are imprisoned at a rate 18.6 times higher than non-Indigenous Australian youth (Harding, Broadhurst, Ferrante, & Loh, 1995). Using South Australian statistics, although Indigenous Australians represent merely 1.2% of South Australian youths, 7.8% of formal interventions are delivered to Indigenous Australian youth (Gale, Bailey-Harris, & Wundersitz, 1990). Furthermore, even though Indigenous Australians represent merely 1.2% of South Australian youths, rates of around 30% have been reported for the proportion of Indigenous Australian youths serving detention orders (Gale et al., 1990; Putninš, 2004).

The question of systemic bias against Indigenous Australians is one that has been extensively explored in the criminal justice literature. The over-representation of Indigenous people in prison is substantial ("Royal Commission into Aboriginal

Deaths in Custody," 1991). Weatherburn, Fitzgerald and Hau (2003) argue that, although there is substantial historical evidence of discriminatory treatment of Aboriginal people by the criminal justice system, the leading cause of Aboriginal overrepresentation in prison is the high rates of Aboriginal involvement in serious crime and not systemic bias in the operation of the criminal justice system. Consequently, efforts to reduce Aboriginal imprisonment rates should focus on reducing crime in Aboriginal communities. Here, it is postulated that programs aimed at reducing substance abuse, family violence and unemployment should form the starting point of any agenda on Aboriginal crime reduction. To address the issues of over-representation of Indigenous Australians within the youth justice system, it may be necessary to examine a wide range of prevention and community development options.

Research comparing young Indigenous Canadian offenders and young non-Indigenous Canadian offenders has indicated that the former group recidivate at elevated rates (Bonta, LaPrairie, & Wallace-Capretta, 1997; Day et al., 2003; Hann & Harman, 1993). In research conducted by Putnins (2004), however, Indigenous Australian status was not significantly correlated with recidivism. Despite this, it has been postulated that Indigenous Australian offenders are characterised by greater levels of recidivism than their non-Indigenous counterparts (Broadhurst, Maller, & Duffecy, 1988). If this latter statement is accurate, it is likely that the consistent application of a risk/needs assessment tool will identify differential rates of recidivism risk between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth. Such an effect would raise the question of whether it is the assessment tool that is biased or whether this is an accurate reflection of greater criminogenic needs in the Indigenous young offender population.

To date, one youth justice risk/needs assessment tool has been validated separately for Indigenous Australian young and non-Indigenous Australian young offenders.

This study indicated that the risk/needs assessment tool was valid for both Indigenous Australian and non-Indigenous Australian young offenders (Putninš, 2005a). If youth justice risk/needs assessments are valid for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian young offenders, but recidivism rates are still higher for Indigenous youth, it may be necessary to target recidivism reduction in young Indigenous Australian offenders through the delivery of intervention programs tailored to their unique criminogenic needs. Here, ethnicity is considered a responsivity factor whereby interventions should be culturally sensitive. Importantly, however, any risk/needs assessment tool introduced in Queensland needs to be validated and normed for young Indigenous offenders.

## **2.9 Implementation Issues**

### **2.9.1 Implementation of risk/needs assessment tools**

Implementation issues have been described as the “Achilles heel” of the Risk-Needs-Responsivity concept (Taxman & Marlowe, 2006). The validity of a risk/needs assessment is compromised if it is not implemented in accordance with the principles of the tool and in a manner consistent with the conditions under which its psychometric properties were evaluated. Unfortunately, the reality of youth justice services in many jurisdictions is that, despite administering risk/needs assessments, youth justice case workers infrequently use this information to drive decisions and case management practices (K. Baker et al., 2003; Flores et al., 2003; Latessa et al., 2002; Maupin, 1993; Young et al., 2006). Resistance in the use of risk/needs assessments have, at times, been so vehement that the information provided by risk/needs assessments were rarely factored into youth justice decisions despite legal obligations and procedural requirements to do so (Maupin, 1993). If a validated risk/needs assessment tool is not utilised in the decision-making process, youth justice decisions are therefore relying on clinical judgments and are subsequently

constrained by the associated limitations regarding lack of consistency and biases of human decision making. In order to maintain the integrity of a risk/needs assessment tool, the tool *must* be implemented and utilised as intended.

Several researchers have identified that the actual impact of risk/needs assessment tools cannot be evaluated unless the system is implemented and utilised as intended (DePanfilis, 1996; Doueck, Bronson, & Levine, 1992; Schene, 1996; Young et al., 2006). Unfortunately, however, youth justice researchers have concluded that “it is far easier to develop a valid instrument than it is to implement its appropriate and effective use” (Sarri and colleague's 2001, p. 179 cited in Young et al., 2006). One of the major hurdles identified is resistance by workers to the introduction of new systems (Maupin, 1993; Young et al., 2006). Youth justice case workers may perceive the tool as a mechanism for limiting their professional discretion and thus may resent its implementation (Ferguson, 2002; Maupin, 1993; Young et al., 2006). Workers may also see risk assessment as ‘just another form to fill in’ rather than a guide for their decision making. Workers may consequently complete the assessment after making a decision, or they may feel that they do not have the time for the additional paper work (Ferguson, 2002; Young et al., 2006). Effective implementation may also be threatened by the availability of quality data to complete assessments, whereby difficulties in collecting accurate information necessary to score tools may foster resistance whereby such tools may only be partially completed, thus jeopardising the validity of the tool (Ferguson, 2002). The utilisation of any of the above strategies by youth justice workers will compromise the integrity of risk/needs assessment tools.

Unless risk/needs assessment tools are implemented appropriately it is impossible to evaluate them effectively. Due to the importance of the process of implementing these tools DePanfilis (1996) has suggested that risk/needs assessment tools should be implemented using a change management process. Although this suggestion was made in relation to child protection systems, these principles can be transferred to the

youth justice system. Using Lewin's Field Theory (Lewin, 1947a, 1947b) she analysed a range of issues that have been identified as significant when implementing risk assessment tools; including issues pertaining to motivation and planning for change, commitment of supervisors and managers, integration with agency laws, policies, missions and purposes, competency and training of staff and workload management (DePanfilis, 1996). DePanfilis (1996) concluded that risk assessment implementation will be more successful if the motivation for adopting risk assessments is realistic, the model selected is credible and has the potential to improve practice and the process for implementation is well planned.

Specific strategies to promote effective implementation of risk/needs assessments derived from research with adults (Ferguson, 2002) and youth (Young et al., 2006) include: (1) fostering staff acceptance and assimilation of, and commitment to, the tool through involving staff in the implementation process (Bonta et al., 2001; Ferguson, 2002; Young et al., 2006); (2) ensuring necessary resources are available to support the tool and its effective implementation (Ferguson, 2002); (3) ensuring staff are competent and proficient in the use of the tool through the provision of quality training (Ferguson, 2002; Young et al., 2006); and (4) ensuring quality assurance mechanisms are in place to monitor the integrity of the risk/needs assessment whereby problems are readily identified and addressed (Ferguson, 2002; Young et al., 2006).

Despite the pertinence of the appropriate implementation of risk/needs assessment tools, the effectiveness of the implementation and utilisation of these tools are infrequently addressed in youth justice research. When implementation issues have been addressed, unfortunately, findings tend to indicate that youth justice officers are resistant to change and rarely utilise tools in accordance with administrative guidelines (K. Baker et al., 2003; Flores et al., 2003). This is problematic given that such practices compromise the integrity of even the best risk/needs tools with extensive

support for their psychometric superiority. This subsequently negates the applicability the evidence-base of risk/needs tools. Consequently, there is a need for youth justice services to implement risk/needs tools within a change management framework, to evaluate both instrument implementation and utilisation, and to readily address problems that compromise the integrity of the tool.

### **2.9.2 User-Friendly Risk/Needs Assessments**

It is pertinent that risk/needs assessments are user-friendly. If a risk/needs assessment is difficult to use it could be argued that these assessments are subsequently less likely to be used correctly, as opposed to those risk/needs assessments that are easy to use. This, in turn, compromises the integrity of the tool. Furthermore, if a risk/needs assessment is difficult to use, assessors may be less likely to utilise the assessment in the decision-making process.

Many issues pertaining to the misuse of risk/needs assessments were discussed in conjunction with implementation issues. Unfortunately, although the usability of risk/needs tools is an important issue, the usability of tools are infrequently evaluated systematically in the risk assessment field. For those assessments that have been evaluated, some negative findings have been documented. To illustrate, some users have found scoring systems confusing (e.g., K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker et al., 2003; Krysik & LeCroy, 2002). Here, the scoring difficulties were proposed to have hampered the reliability of the tool. Furthermore, other assessments have been perceived as difficult to use when usability was assessed in its entirety (Flores et al., 2003). This is an important issue to address because the integrity of any risk/needs assessment tool is reliant on such tools being utilised in decision-making processes and administered in accordance with the principles of the tool. If tools are difficult to use, however, risk/needs assessments may not be used and administered as intended.

### **2.9.3 Measurement of factors**

To be useful, a risk/needs assessment instrument must contain factors that workers can measure with a degree of certainty (Cicchinelli, 1995). Clear measurement guidelines must be provided to ensure that workers understand the scaling of the factors. Additionally, workers need to receive training that is focused on developing a clear and consistent understanding of what the factors are and how to evaluate them. This will promote the effective use of the risk/needs assessment.

### **2.10 Bonta's (2002) Nine Substantive Criteria For The Selection Of Risk Assessment Instruments**

Bonta (2002) proposed nine criteria that should characterise good risk assessment tools. Many of these have been discussed in the preceding sections for youth justice risk/needs assessments. Consequently, these criteria will not be elaborated on and the reader will, instead, be referred to the corresponding section in the report. These principles are presented here to provide a summary of the important components of risk/needs assessments.

1. "Assessment of offender risk should be based on actuarial measures of risk" (Bonta, 2002, p. 356). Actuarial methods are favoured for risk/needs assessments because these methods are based on empirically derived risk factors. The superiority of actuarial risk assessments was discussed in Section 2.2. In short, the superiority of decisions based on actuarial methods have been demonstrated in a number of contexts (see Dawes et al., 1989; Gambrill & Shlonsky, 2000; Hanson & Bussière, 1998). In the youth justice field, a growing body of evidence supports the accuracy and consistency of actuarial models of decision making. Clinical decision making, in contrast, has been found to be limited by inaccuracies, inconsistencies and lack of equitability of clinical decision making (e.g., R. Borum, 2003; Catchpole & Gretton,

2003; Hoge, 2002; Krysik & LeCroy, 2002; Minor et al., 1997; Sanborn, 1996; Schwalbe et al., 2004; Upperton & Thompson, 2005; Wiebush et al., 1995).

Interestingly, the method of scoring utilised to combine items on actuarial risk/needs assessment does not appear to have a significant impact on the predictive accuracy of the tool (see Putninš, 2004). In fact, the Burgess method, whereby each item is scored dichotomously and then summed to reach a total score, has been demonstrated to be as effective as more sophisticated mathematical techniques (e.g., Putninš, 2005a).

2. “Risk assessments should demonstrate predictive validity” (Bonta, 2002, p. 358). Predictive validity is an important criteria for risk/needs assessments because it is through predictive validity that the ability of the risk/needs assessment to predict recidivism is evaluated (Bonta, 2002). Due to the fact that the prediction of recidivism is the goal of risk/needs assessments, it is essential that such assessments possess predictive validity. The importance of predictive validity was discussed in Section 2.7. Despite the pertinence of predictive validity, this criteria has not been evaluated in many youth justice risk/needs assessments (see Appendix A). Furthermore, some youth justice risk/needs assessments have been empirically demonstrated to lack predictive validity (see Appendix A).

3. “Use assessment instruments that are directly relevant to criminal behaviour” (Bonta, 2002, p. 360). Here, variables that have no association with offending behaviour should not be included in risk/needs assessments as they have no bearing on the prediction of recidivism (Bonta, 2002). This is consistent with the needs principle of effective offender rehabilitation, whereby factors associated with offending should be the focus risk/needs assessments and in turn, treatment programs (see Section 2.3).

4. “Select instruments derived from relevant theory” (Bonta, 2002, p. 361). The importance of theory has not been discussed in any preceding section. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of an offenders’ risk, it is necessary to place risk and needs factors within a theoretical framework. The utilisation of theoretical frameworks can contribute to advancements in understanding *how* risk factors may exert their influence. Additionally, decisions regarding which factors to include in risk/needs assessments can be guided by theoretical propositions (Bonta, 2002). Together, this will facilitate more sophisticated predictions of risk which are important for making decisions regarding the best way to respond to cases. Moreover, by fostering a better understanding of risk and needs, it may be possible to develop interventions to address these factors (Bonta, 2002), thus contributing to efforts to reduce recidivism.

5. “Sample multiple domains” (Bonta, 2002, p. 365). Due to that the fact the etiology of offending behaviour is multifaceted, it is important that risk/needs assessments assessing the risk of a continuation of such behaviour samples multiple, empirically-supported domains (Bonta, 2002). Through the assessment of multiple domains, the multiplicity of factors associated with offending behaviour can be assessed.

6. “Assess criminogenic need factors” (Bonta, 2002, p. 367). The pertinence of criminogenic needs were discussed in detail in Section 2.4. In short, the inclusion of criminogenic needs guide intervention strategies, whereby those factors associated with offending behaviour can be targeted to ameliorate recidivism risk (Bonta, 2002; Putninš, 2004; Young et al., 2006).

7. “Limit general personality tests and cognitive tests to the assessment of responsivity” (Bonta, 2002, p. 371). The importance of the inclusion of responsivity factors and the exclusion of non-criminogenic needs were discussed in detail in Section 2.4.3. In short, responsivity factors pertain to variables that may have an

impact on the how the young offender responds to treatment or interventions (Bonta, 2002). Consequently, these variables should be assessed. Factors that have no bearing on criminogenic risk, needs or responsivity, however, do not facilitate the reduction of recidivism or treatment efficacy and should be excluded from risk/needs assessments.

8. “Use different methods to assess risk and needs” (Bonta, 2002, p. 372). Different methods should be utilised to assess risk and needs because the limitations of one method can be bolstered by the advantages of another method. This, in turn, fosters the collection of more accurate data and subsequently, improvements in predictive validity (Bonta, 2002; Putninš, 2004).

9. “Exercise professional responsibility” (Bonta, 2002, p. 374). The final criterion for selecting risk/needs assessments encompasses professionals being trained and competent in the theoretical underpinnings, development, administration and scoring of the risk/needs assessment. This will foster both reliability and validity and is important for professional and legal accountability (Bonta, 2002). In the absence of such proficiency, “...continued administration of the test is professionally questionable” (Bonta, 2002, p .374).

## **2.11 Summary Of Important Factors**

To summarise the preceding discussion, the important attributes of a good youth justice risk/needs assessment includes:

1. Targeting re-offending
2. Being developed using an empirical methodology
3. Being developed with theoretical groundings

4. Assessing both static and dynamic factors
5. Assessing criminogenic risks, criminogenic needs and responsivity factors
6. Sampling multiple domains
7. Encouraging the use of collateral sources
8. Rendering assessments based on actuarial decision-making
9. Incorporating the provision for clinical overrides
10. Being administered according to its principles
11. Having evidence supporting its reliability
12. Having evidence supporting its validity, particularly predictive validity
13. Having evidence supporting its validity across special needs groups
14. Having evidence supporting its validity in Australia
15. Being user-friendly
16. Incorporating quality training to ensure assessors' proficiency in use

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1 Identification of Juvenile Justice risk/needs assessment tools

The terms of reference for this project requested a review of empirically based risk/needs assessment tools for youth justice.

The terms of reference identified four risk/needs assessment tools for youth justice purposes;

- The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) (Canada) and the YLS/CMI-AA (NSW)
- The Victorian Risk/Needs Assessment (recently replaced with the VONIY)
- ASSET – United Kingdom
- Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI)- New York and Washington State Juvenile Court Risk Assessment (WSJCA)

The terms of reference also requested a review be conducted of international and national risk/needs assessment tools in youth justice. From this literature scan, risk/needs assessment tools recognised as having particular merit were to be identified and scoped. Such tools were identified through a three stage screening process.

First, a broad review was undertaken of international and national risk/needs assessment tools used in youth justice services. This review entailed the conduction of a literature review using key databases in the fields of criminology and psychology. These included: CINCH, Criminal Justice Abstracts, National Criminal Justice Reference Service, PsychInfo, Science of Science and Proquest (Psychology). Key

words or terms that were used to conduct the search included: risk assessment, needs assessment, youth justice, juvenile justice, risk, prediction, needs, recidivism, adolescent offenders, juvenile offenders and juvenile delinquency.

As many risk/needs assessments are evaluated in government reports and are not disseminated in journal articles and books, a review of government websites was also conducted. The government websites visited included Australian State Government websites, the New Zealand corrections website and a number of State Government websites across the US, Canada and the UK. Websites of organisations targeting youth justice or risk/needs assessments were also visited, including the following websites: National Council on Crime and Delinquency in the United States, Orbis Partners, Assessment.com, Behavior Data Systems Inc, EarlsCourt Child and Family Centre, Nichols and Molinder, Stetson School Assessment Tools and SJS Systems.

This scan resulted in the identification of literally hundreds of youth justice risk assessments, needs assessments and risk/needs assessments. Consequently, tools were eliminated which were tailored towards substance abuse or suicide, or which did not have any empirical evidence. This resulted in an identification of 69 risk and/or needs assessment tools. Due to the sheer number of risk and/or needs assessment tools that had some empirical evidence, the number of tools were reduced again through the second stage screening process.

Second, these 69 tools were summarised in a screening table and evaluated according to the following criteria: used to assess risks or needs, addresses both risk and needs, includes both static and dynamic factors, evidence for reliability, evidence for validity, designed to target re-offending (see Appendix A). Risk/needs assessments were required to meet these criteria to pass through to the third stage screening process. In addition to these criteria, it was essential that the risk/needs assessment possessed evidence pertaining to its predictive validity. This resulted in the identification of 13

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risk/needs assessment tools. In order to retain only those tools tailored towards general re-offending that could be used as ‘blanket assessments’, a third stage screening process was undertaken.

Third, consistent with the request of the Department of Communities, risk/needs assessment tools were eliminated if they possessed pre-requisites for their use that limited their applicability or if they targeted specific types of re-offending as opposed to general recidivism (see Appendix B). This resulted in the identification of six risk/needs assessment tools.

Those tools requested for review in the terms of reference were retained across the screening process by default. The final risk/needs assessment tools evaluated for their applicability in the Queensland context included:

- The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) (Canada) and the YLS/CMI-AA (NSW)
- The Victorian Risk/Needs Assessment (recently replaced with the VONIY)
- ASSET – United Kingdom
- Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI)- New York and Washington State Juvenile Court Risk Assessment (WSJCA)
- Secure Care Psychosocial Screening (SECAPS) – South Australia
- Santa Barbara Assets and Risks Assessment (SB ARA)

### **Evaluation Criteria**

The terms of reference for the project stated that the evidence base of the risk/needs assessment tools should be evaluated. To address the evaluative criteria established in the terms of reference and the issues associated with implementation, each of the

risk/needs assessment tools identified as having merit will be scoped and evaluated utilising the following questions.

### **Description**

What is the purpose of the tool?

Description of the scales and items of the tool

How was the tool developed?

How is the tool administered?

What is the administration time of the tool?

When can/is the tool employed in the Youth Justice System?

In what jurisdictions has the tool been implemented?

### **Implementation Issues**

Has research indicated that the tool has been implemented according to the model's principles?

Has there been a demonstrated link between the level of risk determined by the tool and the services offered?

Is there scope to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the tool within the system the tool is embedded?

Are there provisions for workload management in the implementation of the tool?

Does the implementation of the tool include the provision for clinical overrides?

Is there scope to address the reliability and validity of overrides?

Does the implementation of the tool incorporate key stakeholders?

What is the timeframe for implementation?

What training /supervision is recommended for the implementation of the tool?

### **Is the tool user-friendly?**

### **Have evaluations of the risk/needs assessment tool been transparent?**

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## **Evidence-Base**

What is the evidence base for the tool?

Have evaluations of the tool been transparent?

What evidence is there for the reliability of the tool?

What evidence is there for the validity of the tool?

What are the outcomes of the tool in relation to reducing recidivism amongst young offenders?

What is the impact of the tool on the quality of the existing Youth Justice Service delivery?

What is the evidence-base for the tool?

**Describe the applicability of the tool to the Australian context.**

**Discuss equity issues regarding special needs groups.**

## **Summary**

Strengths

Weaknesses

Conclusions

## Chapter 4: Results

### ASSET

**Tool:** ASSET

#### Description

##### **What is the purpose of the ASSET?**

The ASSET is a structured assessment tool designed to estimate a young offender's risk of recidivism and identify his or her criminogenic needs (K. Baker et al., 2003; Youth Justice Board, 2003h). The assessment data is then utilised to guide service delivery, whereby interventions are matched to clients' needs in accordance with responsivity factors (K. Baker et al., 2003; Youth Justice Board, 2003h). The ASSET is also designed to track young offender's progress, whereby a re-assessment form is built into the ASSET Intervention Plan (Youth Justice Board, 2003d). The information collected through the administration of the ASSET can also be utilised to collect psychosocial data on youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system (K. Baker et al., 2003).

##### **Description of the scales and items of the ASSET**

The ASSET is comprised of seven components: the core ASSET profile, 'what do you think?', risk of serious harm assessment, risk management plan, vulnerability management plan, bail assessment and final warning assessment (K. Baker et al., 2003).

##### **Core ASSET Profile**

The Core ASSET Profile assesses a range of static and dynamic factors applicable to a youth's case. These factors are utilised to make recommendations regarding the

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appropriate level of intervention suitable for each client in accordance with their identified needs and estimated risk of re-offending (K. Baker et al., 2003). The Core ASSET Profile is the principle component of the risk/needs assessment and is the component that has been targeted for empirical validation.

The Core ASSET Profile assesses the following areas (Youth Justice Board, 2003b):

1. Offending behaviour
2. Living arrangements
3. Family and personal relationships
4. Education
5. Employment and training
6. Neighbourhood
7. Lifestyle
8. Substance use
9. Physical health
10. Emotional and mental health
11. Perception of self and others
12. Thinking and behaviour
13. Attitudes to offending
14. Motivation and change
15. Positive factors (protective factors)
16. Indicators of vulnerability
17. Indicators of serious harm to others

What Do You Think?

'What Do You Think?' is a self-report component of the ASSET. Here, a youth has the opportunity to reflect on their life circumstances and the factors they believe underlie their offending behaviour (K. Baker et al., 2003; Youth Justice Board, 2003f).

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### Risk of Serious Harm Assessment

This assessment is completed only if a youth is flagged in the core ASSET profile as possessing indicators of serious harm to others (K. Baker et al., 2003). This component assesses indicators of serious harm to others more comprehensively than the CORE profile (K. Baker et al., 2003; Youth Justice Board, 2003e).

### Intervention Plan

The Intervention Plan provides a standard format for designing intervention plans that target those areas of need highlighted in the other ASSET components (K. Baker et al., 2003; Youth Justice Board, 2003d). This component incorporates both the Risk Management and Vulnerability Management Plan.

### Risk Management Plan

The Risk Management Plan is completed in addition to the standard 'Intervention Plan' component. This component is completed for those youths who were estimated as posing a medium, high or very high risk of *serious* harm to others in the Risk of Serious Harm Assessment (K. Baker et al., 2003; Youth Justice Board, 2003d).

### Vulnerability Management Plan

The Vulnerability Management Plan is completed in addition to the standard 'Intervention Plan' component. This component is completed for those youths who were estimated as posing a medium, high or very high risk in the assessment of Indicators of vulnerability in the Core ASSET Profile (K. Baker et al., 2003; Youth Justice Board, 2003d).

### Bail Assessment

As the title suggests, this assessment is utilised to make decisions regarding a youth's suitability for bail (Youth Justice Board, 2003a). Consequently, this form is only utilised at this point in the juvenile justice system.

#### Final Warning Assessment

As the title suggests, this assessment is utilised to make decisions at the final warning stage. Essentially, the Final Warning Assessment is an abridged version of the Core ASSET Profile (Youth Justice Board, 2003c). Consequently, this form is only utilised at this point in the youth's case.

#### **How was the ASSET developed?**

The ASSET was developed using a combination of empirical research and consensus among experts (K. Baker et al., 2003). The empirical research utilised in the development of the ASSET pertains to risk factors that have a demonstrable association with offending behaviour (K. Baker et al., 2005). Theoretical perspectives also contributed to the development of the ASSET, including life-course/developmental and criminal career theories (K. Baker et al., 2003). A number of experts were also consulted with regards to factors that should be included in the ASSET. Furthermore, feedback from practitioners was also utilised to develop the ASSET (Youth Justice Board, 2003b). Importantly, some factors that do not have empirically demonstrated predictive power were included in the ASSET due to their utility for practitioners independent of predictive purposes (K. Baker et al., 2003). Subsequent to the initial development of the ASSET, the assessment was subjected to a pilot study evaluation to further refine the tool (K. Baker et al., 2003; Youth Justice Board, 2003b).

#### **How is the ASSET administered?**

The ASSET is completed by juvenile justice staff following an interview with the young offender and the young offender's family (Youth Justice Board, 2003g). It is

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advised that assessors also collect collateral data for supplementary information to assist the decision making process and the completion of the tool (Youth Justice Board, 2003b). Particular sections of the ASSET may be completed more effectively with the assistance of staff with expertise in the associated discipline, such as items pertaining to health, education or substance abuse (Youth Justice Board, 2003b).

Only the dynamic factors of the Core ASSET Profile are summed to calculate a risk/needs score (K. Baker et al., 2003). Here, each of the 13 sections addressing dynamic factors are rated according to the “extent to which these sections are *related to the likelihood of further re-offending*” (K. Baker et al., 2003, p. 11), ranging from not associated at all (0) to very strongly associated (4). The section scores are then summed to give a total risk score, ranging between 0 and 48 (K. Baker et al., 2003). Here, higher overall risk/needs scores are associated with an increased risk for recidivism. Those sections with higher scores, typically scores of three or four, should be targeted for interventions (Youth Justice Board, 2003d). The ‘What Do You Think?’ component is completed by the youth and contributes to case management. The Risk of Serious Harm assessment is only completed for those youths who were determined by the Core ASSET Profile to present a risk of serious harm to others.

### **What is the Administration Time for the ASSET?**

The administration of the ASSET is quite lengthy, requiring approximately two hours for completion.

### **When can/is the ASSET employed in the Youth Justice System?**

The ASSET can be administered to young offenders across all stages of the youth justice system, including (Youth Justice Board, 2003g, p. 2. );

- Bail supervision and support;

- A request for a court report (pre-sentence reports and specific sentence reports);
- Community disposals during the assessment, quarterly review and closure stages;
- Custodial sentences at the assessment, transfer to the community and closure stages
- Specific *Asset* forms are available for those receiving Final Warnings.

**In what jurisdictions has the ASSET been implemented?**

- Across the youth justice system in England and Wales
- Some areas of youth justice in Scotland, including
  - Dundee
  - Edinburgh
  - Falkirk
  - Stirling
  - Orkney
  - Moray
  - Aberdeen
  - Midlothian
  - Perth
  - Kinross
  - East Dunbartonshire
  - Highlands
  - North Lanarkshire
  - Argyll & Bute

**Implementation Issues**

*Has research indicated that the ASSET has been implemented according to the model's principles?*

Preliminary evidence suggests that the ASSET is not being implemented in accordance with its principles. Here, the ASSET was estimated as being utilised in 80% of pre-sentence reports and less frequently for other sentencing reports. Typically, re-assessments were not conducted on the completion of interventions (K. Baker et al., 2003).

*Has there been a demonstrated link between the level of risk determined by the ASSET and the services offered?*

The link between Core ASSET Profile scores and intervention plans were investigated in a study utilising 150 participants (K. Baker et al., 2005). Here, a weak association between the ASSET scores and the intervention plans was exhibited. Rather than targeting those sections with higher scores for interventions, standard targets tended to be utilised across intervention plans, independent of scores on the Core ASSET Profile (K. Baker et al., 2005).

*Is there scope to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the ASSET within the system the ASSET is embedded?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Are there provisions for workload management in the implementation of the ASSET?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Does the implementation of the ASSET include the provision for clinical overrides?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Is there scope to address the reliability and validity of overrides?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Does the implementation of the ASSET incorporate key stakeholders?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature. The development of the ASSET, however, has included key stakeholders (K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker et al., 2003).

### **What is the timeframe for implementation?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

### **What training /supervision is recommended for the implementation of the ASSET?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

### **Is the ASSET user-friendly?**

Preliminary evidence pertaining to the usability of the ASSET has not been favourable;

- Staff members were often confused about the purpose of the ASSET and, in particular, the Risk of Serious Harm Assessment (Roberts et al., 2001 cited in K. Baker et al., 2003).
- Staff felt unqualified to complete sections of the ASSET that address emotional and mental health problems (Roberts et al., 2001 cited in K. Baker et al., 2003).

- Staff perceived the “What do you think?” component to be ‘too complicated’ for some young offenders (Roberts et al., 2001 cited in K. Baker et al., 2003).
- Some staff members reported difficulty navigating the electronic version of the ASSET (K. Baker et al., 2003).
- Staff members encountered difficulty scoring the ASSET, whereby it appears that some staff members rated items according to the severity of the risk factor as opposed to the degree to which that risk factor was thought to be associated with future offending behaviour (K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker et al., 2003). This may have negative implications for the reliability of the ASSET.

### **Evidence-Base**

#### **What is the evidence-base for the ASSET?**

Source: Government reports, whereby evaluations were conducted by the developers of ASSET:

Baker and colleagues (2003)

Baker and colleagues (2005)

Caution must be taken in interpreting the results of these studies as evaluations indicated that the ASSET was not always implemented according to its guidelines (K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker et al., 2003).

**Table 6: Evidence-base for the ASSET**

Study	n	Sample	Criterion	Follow-up period
(K. Baker et al., 2003)	3395	ASSET profiles completed by	Reconviction, frequency of reconviction,	12 months

		Youth Offending Teams (used to assess all young offenders who come into contact with the youth justice system).	sentence at reconviction and gravity of offences.	
(K. Baker et al., 2005)	2233	ASSET profiles completed by Youth Offending Teams (used to assess all young offenders who come into contact with the youth justice system).	Reconviction, frequency of reconviction, number of reconviction offences, seriousness of reconviction, disposal on reconviction and gravity of offences.	24 months

**Have evaluations of the ASSET been transparent?**

The results of studies evaluating the psychometric properties of the ASSET were a part of a transparent, accountable process, whereby the method and results of the

studies are available to the public in published reports. To the authors' knowledge, no study has been conducted by independent researchers.

### **What evidence is there for the reliability of the ASSET?**

#### **Inter-Rater Reliability**

Evidence for the inter-rater reliability was primarily obtained through a recent evaluation conducted by Baker and colleague (2005). Although inter-rater reliability was investigated in an earlier study, due to methodological limitations, only the findings of the more recent study will be reported. Here, inter-rater reliability was estimated using four video case studies and comparing scores of assessors (n = 60). Caution must be taken interpreting these results, however, as the return rate was a low 16%. Additionally, as a limited number of assessors rated the fourth case study, the inter-rater reliability could not be calculated for this case. The rate of agreement for these case studies indicated that the scoring of the ASSET was fairly consistent across assessors (see Table 7 and Table 8). For case study one, this method resulted in an exact agreement of 50%. For case study two, the rate of exact agreement was 46% and for the third case study, the rate of exact agreement was 48%. The corresponding ICC scores for case study one, two and three were .52, .23 and .57 respectively. These ICC ratings indicate that the inter-rater reliability of the ASSET ranges between poor to fair (Skeem & Cauffman, 2003).

**Table 7: Spread of scores around median**

Case Study	Median	Agreement between one point from the median	Agreement between two point from the median	Agreement between three point from the median	Agreement between four point from the median	Agreement between five point from the median
One	6 (14%)	17 (40%)	22 (51%)	26 (60%)	29 (67%)	35 (81%)

Two	4 (9%)	13 (30%)	20 (45%)	25 (57%)	29 (66%)	34 (77%)
Three	2 (8%)	4 (17%)	7 (29%)	8 (33%)	10 (42%)	14 (58%)

**Source:** Baker et al., 2005

**Table 8: Score variation for all components**

Case Study	Exact Agreement	Agreement between one point from the median
One	50%	89%
Two	46%	91%
Three	48%	86%

**Source:** Baker et al., 2005

#### Internal Consistency

The alpha reliabilities obtained for total ASSET scores ranged between .93 (case study two) to .98 (case study one., K. Baker et al., 2005). This suggests that the internal consistency of the ASSET is very good.

#### **What evidence is there for the validity of the ASSET?**

##### Construct Validity

Support for the construct validity of the ASSET was obtained by conducting a factor analysis. Here, the majority of factors identified were consistent with the sections of the ASSET (K. Baker et al., 2003).

##### Predictive Validity

Support for the predictive validity of the ASSET was estimated in two studies (K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker et al., 2003).

Baker and colleagues (2003) analysed the predictive validity of the ASSET utilising a twelve month follow up period. Several different methods were adopted to analyse the tool's predictive validity. First, Baker and colleagues (2003) classified ASSET scores as low, low-medium, medium, medium-high and high. Subsequently, the predictive validity of the ASSET was evaluated by assessing whether the percentage of new convictions differed according to ASSET classifications. Here, scores differed significantly across the classification bands in the expected direction (see Table 9) When ASSET scores were classified as either high or low risk, the ASSET score correctly classified 67% of cases. The ASSET score was also able to significantly differentiate between young offenders that were reconvicted and those that were not, those that were reconvicted once and those that were reconvicted more than once, those that received custodial sentences and those that received other sentences, and those that received community interventions and those that received other sentences. The ASSET score was unable to significantly differentiate between the gravity of offences perpetrated by young offenders when they recidivated. The predictive validity of the ASSET for convictions was maintained across sex, ethnicity and age groups.

**Table 9: Percent reconvicted within 12 months by current ASSET score band**

Score Band	Number of cases (in construction sample)	Percent reconvicted
0-4	203	26.6%
5-9	204	33.8%
10-16	238	49.2%
17-24	209	64.6%
25-48	227	75.8%
All cases	1081	50.6%

Source: Baker and colleagues, 2003, p. 7

Baker and colleagues (2005) re-analysed the predictive validity of the ASSET using a 24 month follow-up period. When ASSET scores were classified as low, low-medium, medium, medium-high and high, the percentage of new reconvictions differed significantly across the classification bands in the expected direction (see Table 10). When ASSET scores were classified as either high or low risk, the ASSET score correctly classified 69.4% of cases. The ASSET score was also able to significantly differentiate between young offenders that were reconvicted and those that were not, those that were reconvicted once or twice and those that were reconvicted more than twice, those that received reconvictions for between one and three offences and those that received reconvictions for four or more offences, those that received custodial sentences and those that received other sentences, those that received community interventions and those that received other sentences, and between the gravity of offences perpetrated by young offenders. The predictive validity of the ASSET for each criterion was maintained across sex, ethnicity and age groups.

Using reconvictions as the criterion, the ROC AUC was .731, indicating strong predictive power. Changes in ASSET scores on re-assessments were also in the expected direction (n = 696; follow up= 12 months), with lower reconviction rates for those who exhibited decreases in risk scores and higher reconviction rates for those who exhibited increases in risk scores. Similar trends were also exhibited for the number of offences committed and time taken for reconviction. In sum, research suggests that the predictive validity of the Core ASSET Profile is strong.

**Table 10: Percent reconvicted within 24 months by current ASSET score band**

Score Band	Number of cases	Percent reconvicted
0-4	418	36%
5-9	437	52%

10-16	477	66%
17-24	448	76%
25-48	453	91%
All cases	2233	65%

Source: Baker and colleagues, 2005, p. 14

**What are the outcomes of the ASSET in relation to reducing recidivism amongst young offenders?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

**What is the impact of the ASSET on the quality of the existing Youth Justice Service delivery?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

**Describe the applicability of the ASSET to the Australian context**

The ASSET is a UK risk/needs assessment tool. To the author's knowledge, the ASSET has not been validated on an Australian sample. Furthermore, to the author's knowledge, there is no evidence of the applicability of the ASSET in the Australian context.

**Discuss equity issues regarding special needs groups**

Research suggests that the ASSET is valid for special needs groups, whereby it was validated across age groups, sex and ethnicity (K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker et al., 2003).

## **Summary**

### **Strengths**

- The ASSET was developed using an empirical methodology
- The development of the ASSET was theory-driven
- The ASSET includes an evaluation of responsivity factors
- The ASSET includes an evaluation of protective factors
- The ASSET samples multiple domains
- The ASSET encourages the use of collateral sources
- Assessment scores are rendered using an actuarial decision-making process
- The core ASSET profile was demonstrated to have strong internal consistency
- The ASSET was demonstrated to have strong support for its predictive validity
- Research supports the predictive validity of the ASSET for: frequency of reconviction, number of reconviction offences, seriousness of reconviction and gravity of offence
- The ASSET is also valid for exceptional offender groups including: younger age groups, females and ethnic minorities
- The ASSET can be used throughout juvenile justice system: bail supervision and support, request for a court report (pre-sentence report and specific sentence report), community orders and secure care.
- The ASSET can be re-administered to track client progress
- The ASSET is very comprehensive
- The ASSET assesses mental health problems

### **Weaknesses**

- Evidence does not suggest that the ASSET is being utilised according to its principles

- The ASSET was demonstrated to have poor to fair inter-rater reliability as indicated by single-rater intra-class correlations
- The applicability to the Australian context unknown
- Feedback from practitioners indicated that the rating system was considered confusing
- The ASSET has a lengthy administration time of approximately two hours
- Feedback from staff indicates that many believe they are unqualified to assess mental health problems

### **Conclusions**

Despite strong support for the predictive validity of the ASSET in the United Kingdom, there is no evidence for the validity of the ASSET in the Australian context. Furthermore, the ASSET has a long administration time and was perceived by practitioners as confusing, whereby it was often misused. Additionally, preliminary evidence indicated that the ASSET possessed poor to fair inter-rater reliability. Consequently, although the ASSET is comprehensive and has a number of strengths, it is not recommended for implementation in the Queensland context.

## **Santa Barbara Assets and Risks Assessment (SB ARA)**

**Tool:** Santa Barbara Assets and Risks Assessment (SB ARA)

### **Description**

#### **What is the purpose of the SB ARA?**

The SB ARA is a semi-structured assessment that incorporates an evaluation of a client's strengths and needs, in addition to assessing their likelihood of recidivism (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien, & Furlong, 2003 cited in Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004). This information is then utilised to guide supervision decisions and service delivery (Jimerson, Sharkey, Furlong et al., 2004).

#### **Description of the scales and items of the SB ARA**

The SB ARA is comprised of 12 domains, including;

1. Parent-child relationships
2. Family criminality
3. Family substance abuse
4. Family mental health
5. Individual factors
6. Individual criminality
7. Individual substance use
8. Community factors
9. Peer factors
10. School factors
11. Sexual activity
12. History of trauma

Each domain encompasses several indicators, with 56 indicators in total (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004). The 12 domains are grouped into two subscales; assets and risks.

### **How was the SB ARA developed?**

The domains and indicators incorporated in the SB ARA were derived from empirical research, whereby factors were selected that had both a theoretical underpinning and an empirically demonstrated relationship with recidivism (O'Brien, Jimerson, Sia, Sharkey & Furlong, 2002 cited in Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004). The factors derived from this research were bolstered with ethnographic interviews and feedback provided by probation officers. This process resulted in the inclusion of many factors incorporated in other youth justice risk assessments, such as the Orange County Risk Assessment, the YLS/CMI, the Arizona Risk Assessment and the First Offender Risk Assessment Index (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004).

### **How is the SB ARA administered?**

The SB ARA is administered by a trained professional, whereby indicators are assessed through the conduction of a semi-structured interview of the client and his/her family (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004). Assessors are also encouraged to access collateral sources for supplementary information (Jimerson, Sharkey, Furlong et al., 2004). The majority of the indicators can be assessed on a continuum ranging from asset to risk. Fourteen indicators, however, can only be assessed as a neutral or risk indicator due to the nature of the factor (Jimerson, Sharkey, Furlong et al., 2004; Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004). Each of the 56 indicators are scored from the interview procedure. The SB ARA can yield a total risk score, a total asset score and an overall score (calculating by subtracting the risk score from the asset score). A recidivism risk range score is also provided, classifying young offenders as posing either a high, moderate, low or minimal risk for recidivism (personal communication, Shane Jimerson, 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2006).

### **What is the Administration Time for the SB ARA?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

### **When can/is the SB ARA employed in the Youth Justice System?**

For the purpose of the empirical investigation of the reliability and validity of the tool, the SB ARA was administered during the intake interview upon entrance into the probation system (Jimerson, Sharkey, Furlong et al., 2004; Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004). The author is unsure whether the SB ARA can be employed at other points in the youth justice system.

### **In what jurisdictions has the SB ARA been implemented?**

The SB-ARA has been implemented across the Santa-Barbara county (Jimerson, Sharkey, Furlong et al., 2004; Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004).

### **Implementation Issues**

*Has research indicated that the SB ARA has been implemented according to the model's principles?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Has there been a demonstrated link between the level of risk determined by the SB ARA and the services offered?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Is there scope to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the SB ARA within the system the SB ARA is embedded?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature. .

*Are there provisions for workload management in the implementation of the SB ARA?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Does the implementation of the SB ARA include the provision for clinical overrides?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Is there scope to address the reliability and validity of overrides?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Does the implementation of the SB ARA incorporate key stakeholders?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature. The development of the SB ARA, however, included key stakeholders (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004).

### **What is the timeframe for implementation?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

### **What training /supervision is recommended for the implementation of the SB ARA?**

Assessors are required to be trained in the administration and scoring of the SB ARA (Jimerson, Sharkey, Furlong et al., 2004). For the purpose of the evaluation of the reliability and validity of the SB ARA, probation officers received two hours training

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on the administration of the semi-structured interview and scoring of the tool (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004).

**Is the SB ARA user-friendly?**

No systematic evaluation has been conducted to investigate how user-friendly the SB ARA is considered by probation officers. Anecdotal evidence, however, indicates that probation officers believe the SB ARA is useful (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004). Positive anecdotal evidence was also obtained from youths and their families regarding the positive focus of the tool, as opposed to a risk and pathological focus (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004).

**Evidence-Base**

**What is the evidence-base for the SB ARA?**

Source: Refereed Journal Articles:

Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien, & Furlong (2004)

Jimerson, Sharkey, Furlong & O'Brien (2004)

It must be noted, however, that the samples utilised in these studies were first-offenders. Consequently, the reliability and validity of the SB ARA for repeat offenders is unknown.

**Table 11: Evidence Base for the SB ARA**

Study	n	Sample	Criterion	Follow-up period
Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien, &	423	<b>First time</b> juvenile offenders	Recidivism (excludes status offences,	6 months

Furlong (2004)			probation violations or violations of court orders)	
Jimerson, Sharkey, Furlong & O'Brien (2004)	566	<b>First time</b> juvenile offenders	Recidivism (excludes status offences, probation violations or violations of court orders)	12 months

**Have evaluations of the risk/needs assessment been transparent?**

The authors were only able to locate two studies investigating the SB ARA. The results of these evaluations are available to the public. These evaluations were a part of a transparent, accountable process, whereby the method and results of the study are available in the public domain in peer-reviewed journals. To the authors' knowledge, no study has been conducted by independent researchers.

**What evidence is there for the reliability of the SB ARA?**

Inter-Rater Reliability

Preliminary evidence for the inter-rater reliability was obtained using 12 assessment interviews and comparing the rate of agreement between a consensus score from two researchers and the score of the probation officer. Overall, this method resulted in an exact agreement of 86%, whereby percentages ranged between 74% and 96% for each of the items. The percentage of exact agreement was also assessed between the two researchers, with an overall exact agreement of 85%, whereby percentages ranged

between 77% and 94% for each of the items. In sum, this indicates that the inter-rater reliability is adequate, although the computation of ICC ratings would have been desirable for comparisons across risk/needs assessment tools.

#### Internal Consistency

Evidence for internal consistency indicates that the reliability of the SB ARA is very good, with a Cronbach's alpha of .858.

#### **What evidence is there for the validity of the SB ARA?**

##### Construct Validity.

Jimerson and colleagues (2004) purport that evidence for the construct validity of the SB ARA is supported by the fact that only variables that have been empirically demonstrated to be associated with recidivism were included in the tool.

##### Convergent Validity.

Support for the convergent validity was obtained by correlating the SB ARA with the Behaviour and Emotional Rating Scale (assesses behavioural and emotional strengths), the Ohio Youth Probation Severity Scale (assesses a number of problems encountered by a client in the 30 days preceding the assessment) and the Orange County Risk Assessment (youth justice risk assessment for recidivism). The SB ARA yielded significant correlations with each of the tools in the expected direction. These correlations were moderate for the Behaviour and Emotional Rating Scale ( $r = -.55$ ) and the Ohio Youth Probation Severity Scale ( $r = .40$ ) and were strong for the Orange County Risk Assessment ( $r = .72$ ). This result must be interpreted with caution, however, as research indicates that the predictive validity of the Orange County Risk Assessment is poor (Ashford & LeCroy, 1990; Sharkey, Furlong, Jimerson, & O'Brien, 2003).

## Predictive Validity

The predictive validity of the SB ARA has been evaluated in a study with a six month follow up period and a study with a 12 month follow up period.

### *Six month follow-up study*

Support for the predictive validity of the SB ARA was obtained by assessing whether the items of the SB ARA significantly predicted recidivism using a logistic regression (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004). The results indicated that the SB ARA significantly predicted recidivism for both male and female first offenders (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004). The correct classification rates were 100% for females (n = 125) and 84% for males (n = 316).

### *Twelve month follow-up study*

The design of the 12 month follow-up study was similar to the aforementioned study. Here, the results indicated that the SB ARA significantly predicted recidivism for both male and female first offenders over a 12 month timeframe (Jimerson, Sharkey, Furlong et al., 2004). The correct classification rates were 100% for females and 83% for males. In sum, the SB ARA appears to possess good predictive validity.

## **What are the outcomes of the SB ARA in relation to reducing recidivism amongst young offenders?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

## **What is the impact of the SB ARA on the quality of the existing Youth Justice Service delivery?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

### **Describe the applicability of the SB ARA to the Australian context**

The SB ARA is an American risk assessment tool that was developed in an area with a large Mexican American population (Jimerson, Sharkey, Furlong et al., 2004; Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004). Whether a tool validated on this sample can be generalised to the Queensland context is unknown. To the authors' knowledge, the SB ARA has not been validated on an Australian sample. Furthermore, to the authors' knowledge, there is no evidence of the applicability of this tool in the Australian context.

### **Discuss equity issues regarding special needs groups**

The SB ARA has demonstrable predictive validity for both male and female juvenile offenders (Jimerson, Sharkey, Furlong et al., 2004; Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004).

### **Summary**

#### **Strengths**

- The SB ARA was developed using an empirical methodology
- The development of the SB ARA was theory-driven
- The SB ARA includes an evaluation of protective factors
- The SB ARA samples multiple domains
- The SB ARA encourages the use of collateral sources
- Assessment scores are rendered using an actuarial decision-making process
- Preliminary evidence supports the tool possessing inter-rater reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, construct validity and predictive validity
- The SB ARA is valid for both male and female young offenders

- Preliminary evidence suggests that the SB ARA was perceived to be useful by probation officers
- The SB ARA was received well by young offenders and their parents
- The SB ARA assesses both risks and assets

### **Weaknesses**

- The effectiveness of the implementation of the SB ARA has not been evaluated
- There is no evidence of the validity of the SB ARA across ethnic groups and younger and older adolescents
- The SB ARA does not appear to include an evaluation of responsivity factors
- No systematic evaluation has been conducted that assesses how user-friendly the SB ARA is perceived to be
- Evaluations of the psychometric properties of the SB ARA have only utilised first offenders, therefore the reliability and validity of the SB ARA for repeat offenders is unknown
- There is no evidence of the applicability of the SB ARA to the Australian context

### **Conclusions**

Despite support for the predictive validity of the SB ARA for first offenders in the Santa Barbara county, there is no evidence for the validity of the SB ARA in the Australian context. Additionally, the reliability and validity of the SB ARA for repeat offenders is unknown. Furthermore, the SB ARA does not appear to evaluate responsivity factors. Consequently, the SB ARA is not recommended for implementation in the Queensland context.

## Secure Care Psychosocial Screening (SECAPS)

**Tool:** Secure Care Psychosocial Screening (SECAPS)

### Description

#### **What is the purpose of the SECAPS?**

The primary purpose of the SECAPS is to provide an assessment of the risk of recidivism, criminogenic needs and responsivity factors of youths sentenced to secure care (Putninš, 2004, 2005d; Thompson & Putninš, 2003). In addition to assessing criminogenic risk, the SECAPS also functions as a tool to screen a client's risk of self-harming behaviour (Putninš, 2004; Thompson & Putninš, 2003). The SECAPS was designed as a screening tool, as opposed to a full assessment (Putninš, 2004, 2005d). Consequently, the SECAPS functions as a tool for flagging areas which should be subjected to more in-depth assessment (Putninš, 2004). The SECAPS is also designed to serve as a mechanism for collecting psychosocial epidemiological data of youthful offenders to guide decisions regarding policy and program planning (Putninš, 2004). Furthermore, the data collected through the utilisation of the SECAPS tool is intended to facilitate the conduction of additional research which will further refine the SECAPS (Putninš, 2004) and advance the knowledge-base in the juvenile justice field (e.g., Putninš, 2001; Putninš, 2004, 2005c).

#### **Description of the scales and items of the SECAPS**

The SECAPS is comprised of a main record form, a general background questionnaire, the SECAPS screening summary checklist, a risk recidivism index and several additional basic skills test materials targeting numeracy, reading and time-telling (Putninš, 2005d).

The key domains assessed include (Putninš, 2005d):

- Offending history
- Sight and hearing
- Family
- Residence
- Leisure/recreation
- Literacy, numeracy and time-telling
- Substance use
- Mood and suicide
- Peers
- Anger/aggression
- Education
- Employment
- Restlessness and attention problems
- Reasons for offending
- Non-verbal intellectual functioning
- Assessment behaviour

#### Recidivism Risk Index

The SECAPS main record form, general background questionnaire and additional skills tests aim to address a broad range of factors, including both criminogenic needs, non-criminogenic needs, responsivity factors and risk factors. The recidivism risk index was added subsequent to the implementation of the full SECAPS assessment for the purpose of predicting re-offending. The recidivism risk index is comprised of a number of items from the full SECAPS tool which are used to estimate the risk of recidivism for a client in the six month post-release period (recidivism risk index., Putninš, 2005a; Thompson & Putninš, 2003). More specifically, these items include:

- Current age
- Age at first offence
- Number of prior offences
- Recent alcohol and/or inhalant use
- ADHD-related signs (self-reported difficulties with restlessness, concentration, impulsiveness and boredom)

#### Optional Tests

Some optional test modules are provided that target peer relationships, leisure and recreation, anger and conflict, ADHD, thinking and feeling and substance use (Putninš, 2005d).

#### **How was the SECAPS developed?**

Prior to the development of the recidivism risk index, the SECAPS was a guided clinical assessment. Items were selected for the full SECAPS assessment if they had been demonstrated empirically to be associated with recidivism and delinquency (Putninš, 2005d; Thompson & Putninš, 2003). Items were also selected if they provided important information pertaining to responsivity factors that may have an impact on assessments of, and interventions with, the young person (Putninš, 2005d). Furthermore, some items were selected if they assessed non-criminogenic needs that were deemed important for the future of the young person (Putninš, 2005d). Several of the items included in the full SECAPS tool were piloted in a field trial and, where it was deemed necessary, amendments to the content of the SECAPS and the wording of the items were undertaken (Thompson & Putninš, 2003).

The recidivism risk index is an actuarial scale, whereby the items included in this index were derived from an empirical investigation into the factors from the full

SECAPS tool that best predicted recidivism (Putninš, 2005a; Thompson & Putninš, 2003).

The additional tests administered alongside the SECAPS were selected due to research which supports the relationship between the criteria measured and delinquency and recidivism (Thompson & Putninš, 2003).

### **How is the SECAPS administered?**

The SECAPS is only administered when it is anticipated that the young offender will remain in secure care for a minimum of a few days, typically exceeding six days (Thompson & Putninš, 2003). The SECAPS is largely a self-report screening tool. The full SECAPS tool involves the completion of the main record form, the general background questionnaire, the SECAPS screening summary checklist and additional basic skills tests (Putninš, 2005d). The SECAPS forms are largely compiled of self-report questions that can be answered using a 'tick and flick' format (Putninš, 2005d; Thompson & Putninš, 2003). Once these forms are completed, the responses and scores are entered into a computer database which generates a narrative report, including the recidivism risk index (Putninš, 2005d; Thompson & Putninš, 2003). The recidivism risk index can be utilised to make decisions regarding service delivery and case management. Assessors are permitted to use their clinical judgement to override the risk level generated by the recidivism risk index (Putninš, 2005d). However, all overrides must be accompanied by an explanation documented in the young offender's file. Clinical overrides may take place when an assessor has access to information not encompassed in the SECAPS which is deemed pertinent to a young offender's likelihood of recidivism. Alternatively, an assessor may believe that certain factors should be weighted more heavily in a particular case (Putninš, 2005d).

The optional assessment modules are administered when the assessor believes that the young offender requires further assessment in one or more of the six areas

covered by these modules (i.e. peer relationships, leisure and recreation, anger and conflict, ADHD, thinking and feeling and substance use., Putninš, 2005d).

The SECAPS should be re-administered upon a young offender's re-entry into secure care if it has been longer than 12 months since a SECAPS assessment has been conducted (Putninš, 2004; Thompson & Putninš, 2003).

### **What is the Administration Time for the SECAPS?**

If the optional additional modules are not administered, the administration time for the SECAPS is approximately 30 minutes.

### **When can/is the SECAPS employed in the Youth Justice System?**

The SECAPS is validated for use in secure care facilities for young offenders (Putninš, 2004, 2005d). The SECAPS can be employed for those youth on remand or sentenced on detention orders (Putninš, 2004). The recidivism risk index may also *assist* in making decisions pertaining to appropriate levels of supervision, eligibility for entrance into programs and early release (Putninš, 2005a).

### **In what jurisdictions has the SECAPS been implemented?**

The SECAPS has been implemented in South Australia since 1994 (Thompson & Putninš, 2003). The implementation of the SECAPS is planned for The Ashley Youth Detention Centre in Tasmania in the near future (personal communication, Aldis Putnins, 14 October, 2005). The SECAPS has also been utilised in other states and the ACT (Thompson & Putninš, 2003).

### **Implementation Issues**

*Has research indicated that the SECAPS has been implemented according to the model's principles?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Has there been a demonstrated link between the level of risk determined by the SECAPS and the services offered?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Is there scope to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the SECAPS within the system the SECAPS is embedded?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Are there provisions for workload management in the implementation of the SECAPS?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Does the implementation of the SECAPS include the provision for clinical overrides?*

As stated previously, assessors are permitted to use their clinical judgement to override the recidivism risk index determined by the SECAPS. All overrides, however, must be accompanied by an explanation documented in the young offender's file (Putninš, 2005d).

*Is there scope to address the reliability and validity of overrides?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Does the implementation of the SECAPS incorporate key stakeholders?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

### **What is the timeframe for implementation?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

### **What training /supervision is recommended for the implementation of the SECAPS?**

Assessors can be trained in the SECAPS within a few hours (Putninš, 2004). Additionally, items 23b, 23c and 23d of the SECAPS, which assess intellectual functioning, must be completed by a psychologist (Putninš, 2004). Furthermore, Putnins (2004, p. 18) states that “it is also preferable that a professional worker oversees the production of the SECAPS assessment reports”.

### **Is the SECAPS user-friendly?**

The author was unable to find evidence attesting to how user-friendly the SECAPS is perceived by staff. However, the SECAPS was designed to be user-friendly and easy to administer (Putninš, 2004).

### **Evidence-Base**

#### **What is the evidence-base for the SECAPS?**

Source: PhD Thesis written by the developer of the SECAPS:

Putnins (2004)

Source: Refereed Journal Articles:

Putnins (2005a)

Putnins (Putninš, 2005c)

Putnins (Putninš, 2002)

Putnins (Putninš, 2003)

Bickel and Campbell (2002 cited in Putninš, 2004).

**Table 12: Evidence Base of the SECAPS**

Study	n	Sample	Criterion	Follow-up period
(Putninš, 2005a) (Putninš, 2004)	Construction sample n = 458  Validation sample n = 152	Youths sentenced to secure care in South Australia	All proven offences in South Australia (excludes breaches of bonds and bail)	Six months post-release
(Putninš, 2005c)	144-145	Youths sentenced to secure care in South Australia	Suicidal ideation or suicidal attempt	Six months to four years
(Putninš, 2002)	454	Youths sentenced to secure care in South Australia	Any new offending	Six months
(Putninš, 2003)	446	Youths sentenced to secure care in South Australia	Any new offending	Six months

**Have evaluations of the SECAPS been transparent?**

Several studies have evaluated the SECAPS. The results of these evaluations are available to the public. These evaluations were a part of a transparent, accountable process, whereby the method and results of the studies are available in the public

domain in peer-reviewed journals and a PhD thesis. To the authors' knowledge, no study has been conducted by independent researchers.

### **What evidence is there for the reliability of the SECAPS?**

#### Test-retest stability

Test-retest stabilities (calculated over a test-retest period of 12 months) were calculated for several items. The results of these items ranged from moderate to high (Putninš, 2004);

- Age of being first charged or arrested by the police (n=203) →  $r = .67$
- Concise Word Reading Test raw score (n=201) →  $r = .91$
- Classification of reading ability into levels (n=201) → 89% fell into the same reading category
- Writing task - words spelt correctly →  $r = .83$
- Classification of writing ability into levels (n=111) → 87% fell into the same writing ability category
- Numeracy - total correct (n=204) →  $r = .77$
- Basic money handling skills (n=204) → 84% fell into the same reading category
- Coloured Progressive Matrices raw score →  $r = .67$
- Standard Progressive Matrices standard score →  $r = .49$
- Classification into intellectual functioning (IQ) ranges (n=120) → 71% fell into the same category
- Time telling (n=206) → 73% who made an error during the administration of the first SECAPS test, made an error during the administration of the SECAPS at the re-test

The test-re-test stabilities were also generated for five research indices derived from the SECAPS items. For a six month test-retest period, these were moderate (Putnins, 2004);

Substance use	$r = .60$
Suicidality	$r = .51$
ADHD signs	$r = .52$
Depression	$r = .48$
Conduct problems	$r = .50$

The test-retest stabilities typically declined when the retesting was conducted over 6 months or more (Putnins, 2004);

Substance use	$r = .29$
Suicidality	$r = .35$
ADHD signs	$r = .36$
Depression	$r = .28$
Conduct problems	$r = .52$

Caution must be taken when interpreting the test-retest stability results as changes in scores over time may have been due to real change (i.e. improvement or deterioration) in the areas assessed, rather than due to error of measurement. It is likely, for example, that following interventions, some of the youth's skill level may have increased. However, many of the test-retest stability scores would be considered poor if they had been computed as test-retest reliability over shorter time intervals, whereby most test-retest reliability scores are between .80 and .90 (Gregory, 2000).

#### Internal consistency

Alpha coefficients were also generated to examine the internal consistency for five research indices derived from the SECAPS items. For young offenders, these ranged between .41 to .70 (Putnins, 2004);

Substance use	= .62 & .63
Suicidality	= .65 & .70
ADHD signs	= .58 & .62
Depression	= .48 & .57
Conduct problems	= .47 & .41

Although this indicates that some scales fall below the .6 benchmark proposed by Gregory (2000), Putnin states that;

The internal consistencies for the largest assessment group (young offenders at the first assessment) are all in the range .47 to .65, which is consistent with Boyle's (1991) suggestion that item-homogeneity coefficients should ideally fall in the range of .3 to .7. Lower values indicate a strong likelihood that the measure is multidimensional and internally inconsistent while higher values suggest redundancy and a lack of item breadth.

(Putninš, 2004, p. 53)

Using this evaluative criteria, the internal consistency would be considered adequate.

For high school students assessed with the SECAPS, alpha coefficients ranged between acceptable and good (Putninš, 2004);

Substance use	= -
Suicidality	= -
ADHD signs	= .68
Depression	= -
Conduct problems	= .71

### Reliability of the Recidivism Risk Index

The reliability of the recidivism risk index has not been estimated. In relation to test-retest reliability, Putnins (personal communication, 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2006) proposed that due to the fact that many of the items are static in nature, the recidivism risk index is unlikely to change in a short period of time. Exceptions to this may occur if the young offender has a birthday, commits a new offence or clerical errors are made. Reliability data from the full SECAPS tool may provide some preliminary evidence for test-retest reliability, whereby the ADHD signs research index was indicated to have acceptable internal consistency.

### **What evidence is there for the validity of the SECAPS?**

#### Predictive Validity

The recidivism risk index was constructed and validated in research conducted by Putnins (2005a). Support for the predictive validity of the recidivism risk index was computed by correlating the risk index with re-offending in both the sample utilised to construct the index and a validation sample. Furthermore, ROC AUC statistics were also computed to assess the predictive validity of the recidivism risk index independent of recidivism base rates.

#### Construction Sample

A correlation between the risk index and re-offending was computed for the construction sample. This yielded a significant relationship ( $r = .34$ ). For this sample, the ROC AUC was .70, indicating strong predictive power. A correlation between the risk index and re-offending was also computed for a sample of young offenders who re-entered secure care and were subsequently re-assessed. Again, this yielded a significant correlation ( $r = .32$ ). For the sample that was re-assessed, the ROC AUC was .68, indicating moderate-to-high predictive power. Importantly, the relationship between the recidivism risk index and re-offending was maintained for both

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Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young offenders and male and female young offenders.

#### Validation Sample

A correlation between the risk index and re-offending was computed for a validation sample. This yielded a significant relationship ( $r = .36$ ). For this sample, the ROC AUC was .71, indicating that the strong predictive power of the recidivism risk index was maintained in the validation sample.

#### Summary

In sum, the SECAPS recidivism risk index appears to possess strong predictive validity. This is further illustrated in Table 13 which demonstrates that as the Risk Index increases, the rate of re-offending also steadily increases.

**Table 13: Risk scores by proven reoffending status at 6 months after release following SECAPS assessment (construction and validation samples combined)**

RISK Score	Not reoffend	Reoffend	Total	% reoffend
2-3	7	1	8	12.5
4-5	21	4	25	16.0
6-7	30	28	58	48.3
8-9	53	58	111	52.3
10-11	51	105	156	67.3
12-13	36	92	128	71.9
14-15	54	79	106	74.5
16-17	13	57	70	81.4

18-19	1	23	24	95.8
20-21	0	10	10	100.00
22-23	-	-	0	-
24-25	0	1	1	100.00
Total	239	458	697	65.7

Source: Putnins (2005a, p. 11)

### **Full SECAPS Assessment**

The SECAPS recidivism risk index is the component intended to predict recidivism. This component comprises of those items on the full SECAPS assessment that best predict recidivism. The other items included in the SECAPS have weak associations with recidivism, whereby nearly all of these are non-significant (Putnins, 2002, 2003, 2004). This is likely to be due to the fact that the full SECAPS tool also assesses factors related to non-criminogenic needs and responsivity factors "...to alert staff about possible needs or deficits that might impede the youth's ability to cope with various daily survival demands" (Putnins, 1999, p. 158).

### **Concurrent Validity**

#### **Full SECAPS Assessment**

The author could not locate any evidence for concurrent validity using recidivism as the criterion. The concurrent validity of the depression subscale, however, has been supported, whereby it was demonstrated to be significantly associated with suicidality (Putnins, 2005c). Concurrent validity was also demonstrated for the ADHD subscale, whereby this subscale was significantly associated with the Adolescent Psychopathology Scale's ADHD score (Bickel and Campbell, 2002 cited in Putnins, 2004).

**What are the outcomes of the SECAPS in relation to reducing recidivism amongst young offenders?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

**What is the impact of the SECAPS on the quality of the existing Youth Justice Service delivery?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

**Describe the applicability of the SECAPS to the Australian context**

The SECAPS has been developed, validated and implemented in an Australian population (Putninš, 2004, 2005a; Thompson & Putninš, 2003). Consequently, the SECAPS can be considered applicable to the Australian context. As populations may differ from South Australia to Queensland, however, the SECAPS would still require norming to be undertaken in the Queensland youth justice system.

**Discuss equity issues regarding special needs groups**

The SECAPS recidivism risk index has demonstrable predictive validity for both male and female juvenile offenders and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal juvenile offenders (Putninš, 2005a).

**Summary**

**Strengths**

- The SECAPS was developed using an empirical methodology (although some variables that have not been empirically related to recidivism or offending were included)

- The SECAPS includes an evaluation of responsivity factors
- The SECAPS samples multiple domains
- The SECAPS encourages the use of collateral sources
- Assessment scores are rendered using an actuarial decision-making process
- The SECAPS incorporates the provision for clinical overrides
- The SECAPS is grounded in principles of “what works”
- The recidivism risk index of the SECAPS has strong predictive validity
- The SECAPS is validated on an Australian sample
- The SECAPS recidivism risk index is also valid for exceptional offender groups including: males and females, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal
- The SECAPS full assessment has acceptable concurrent validity for some scales
- The SECAPS is relatively quick to administer, taking approximately 30 minutes to complete
- The SECAPS can be re-administered to track of client progress
- Although the SECAPS was not derived from theory, several items encompassed in the tool assess factors which are supported by criminological and/or psychological theories (Putninš, 2004)

### **Weaknesses**

- The effectiveness of the implementation of the SECAPS has not been evaluated
- The reliability of the SECAPS recidivism risk index is unknown (although these items were derived from the full assessment, the reliability of individual items were not reported)
- It is difficult to interpret the test-retest stability scores due to a substantial period between testing and retesting
- The SECAPS is not suitable for pre-sentence reports, or community orders

- The SECAPS versions designed for community orders and residential care do not possess sufficient validation data at this stage. Only the SECAPS has been subjected to rigorous evaluation
- No evidence exists attesting to how user-friendly the SECAPS is

### **Conclusions**

Despite strong support for the predictive validity of the SECAPS recidivism risk index in a South Australian population, the SECAPS is only appropriate to be used with young people in secure care. This limits the applicability of this tool in the Queensland context because the Department of Communities is committed to providing young offenders with a continuity of service across both secure care and community based interventions. Consequently, the SECAPS is not recommended for implementation in the Queensland context.

## **Victorian Offending Needs Indicator for Youth (VONIY)**

**Tool:** Victorian Offending Needs Indicator for Youth (VONIY), primarily the Youth Offending component

### **Description**

#### **What is the purpose of the VONIY?**

The VONIY was developed to assist the case-planning process (Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b). More specifically, the VONIY serves four primary purposes.

1. To assess the level of risk posed by a client. This is subsequently used to recommend a level of intervention deemed appropriate for each youth's risk score (Youth Offending Scale., Casey & Day, 2004; Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b).
2. To assess the types and number of protective factors a client possesses (Protective Factors section., Casey & Day, 2004; Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b).
3. To identify whether a client has special needs which must be attended to or taken into consideration (special needs section., Casey & Day, 2004).
4. To examine offence-related factors relevant to case planning (offence-related factors section., Casey & Day, 2004).

#### **Description of the scales and items of the VONIY**

The VONIY is comprised of four sections: youth offending (risk/needs assessment), protective factors, special needs and offence-related factors (Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005a). Each of the four sections corresponds with each of the four purposes of the VONIY identified above.

## Youth Offending

The Youth Offending component is comprised of 40 items that assess both risks and needs (Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005a). This component is utilised to make recommendations regarding the appropriate level of intervention suitable for each client in accordance with their identified needs and their estimated risk of re-offending (Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b).

The youth offending component is divided into seven subscales (Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005a):

1. Offending profile
2. Family circumstances
3. Accommodation and finances
4. Substance use
5. Education, training and employment
6. Peer relationships and community linkages
7. Attitudes and behaviour

## Protective Factors

As the title suggests, the protective factors component assesses the presence of selected protective factors (Casey & Day, 2004). Due to the fact that there is little empirical evidence to support a relationship between protective factors and recidivism in youth, the presence of protective factors were excluded from the youth offending component (Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b). Consequently, the assessment of protective factors is utilised for information gathering purposes, whereby this section may provide valuable information for case-planning.

The protective factors component is divided into three subscales (Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005a):

1. individual
2. family
3. community

### Special Needs Component

The special needs component identifies whether a client has special needs which must be attended to or taken into consideration (Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b). The inclusion of this component satisfies the responsivity principle (Casey & Day, 2004). The special needs assessed in this component include those relating to demographic characteristics of clients and health and developmental needs (Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005a).

### Offence-related Factors

As the title suggests, the offence-related factors component assesses pertinent factors in relation to the current offence that may inform case planning (Casey & Day, 2004; Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b). This component has two subsections: offence analysis (e.g., increase in severity of offence) and attitudes and skills (e.g. denial of responsibility., Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005a).

Each of these components are summarised in an Assessment Summary.

As the current evaluation is primarily concerned with the risk/needs tool, the 'youth offending' section will be the focus of the following analysis.

### **How was the VONIY developed?**

The Youth Offending Scale is an actuarial scale, whereby the items included have been demonstrated empirically to be associated with recidivism (Casey & Day, 2004). More specifically, the Youth Offending Scale was based on a pre-existing Victorian risk/needs assessment tool; the Risk and Needs Assessment Tool (RANT). As the

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RANT was developed from the YLS/CMI, the Youth Offending Scale is also indirectly developed from the YLS/CMI (Casey & Day, 2004). In addition to being developed from the RANT, the Youth Offending Scale of the VONIY was also informed by factors identified as important in the Juvenile Justice Rehabilitation Review conducted by Day, Howells and Rickwood (2003). Furthermore, principles of social learning theory informed the development of the Youth Offending Scale (Casey & Day, 2004).

### **How is the VONIY administered?**

#### Youth offending Component

The Youth Offending component is comprised of 40 items. Each of the items that apply to the client's case are scored as present and are summed to give a total risk score, ranging between 0 and 40 (Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b). These scores are matched with a recommended level of intervention, ranging between low and intensive levels of intervention (Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005a). Due to the distinction between life-course persistent and adolescent-limited offenders in the current youth justice literature, different scores correspond to different levels of intervention for young offenders (10 to 14 years old), as opposed to older offenders (15 to 20 years old., Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b). Here, younger offenders are assessed as posing a greater risk, and requiring more intensive interventions, due to the likelihood that they may become a life-course persistent offender (see Figure 1., Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b).

**For clients aged 15-20 years at time of current offence, use this scale -**

LOW (0-10)      MODERATE (11-20)      HIGH (21-30)      INTENSIVE (31-40)



**For clients aged 10-14 years at time of current offence, use this scale -**

MODERATE (0-13)      HIGH (14-28)      INTENSIVE (29-40)



**Figure 1: Intervention Level Indicated by the VONIY**

**Source:** Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b, p. 6.

#### **What is the Administration Time for the VONIY?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

#### **When can/is the VONIY employed in the Youth Justice System?**

The VONIY can be administered to clients on community-based orders and those in secure care (Casey & Day, 2004). The VONIY can be administered at the commencement of an order and re-administered on the completion of an order. The VONIY will not be utilised for the preparation of pre-sentence reports (personal communication, Ros Harris, 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2006).

#### **In what jurisdictions has the VONIY been implemented?**

The VONIY is yet to be implemented. To date, the VONIY has been piloted in approximately 20% of the youth justice population in Victoria (Harris, 2004). The VONIY will be implemented in Victoria following subsequent evaluations.

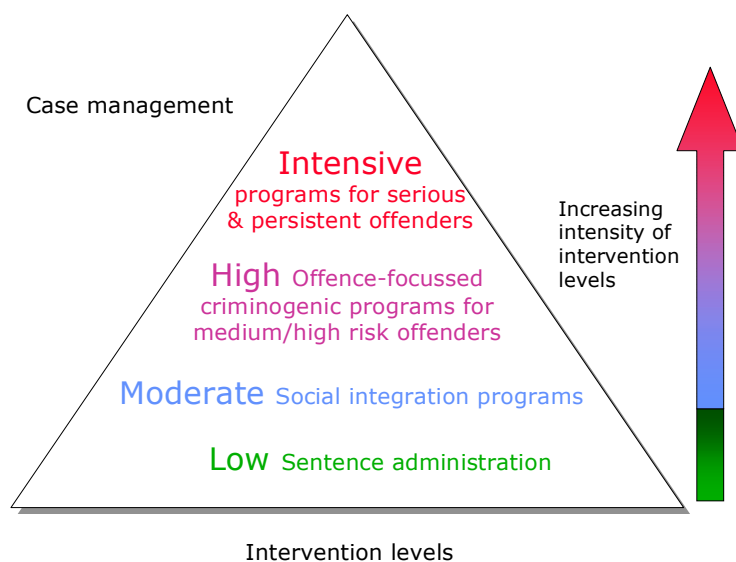
## Implementation Issues

*Has research indicated that the VONIY has been implemented according to the model's principles?*

The VONIY is yet to be implemented in practice. The author was unable to access this information in relation to the pilot project in the available literature.

*Has there been a demonstrated link between the level of risk determined by the VONIY and the services offered?*

The VONIY is yet to be implemented in practice. As the Youth Offending Scale is directly linked to recommended levels of interventions (see Figure 2 (previous) and Figure 2), it is likely this link will be evident in practice. However, the link between the level of risk determined by the VONIY and the services offered is contingent on the VONIY being implemented and utilised in accordance with its principles.



**Figure 2: Framework for Rehabilitation Indicated by the VONIY**

Source: Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b, p. 7.

*Is there scope to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the VONIY within the system the VONIY is embedded?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Are there provisions for workload management in the implementation of the VONIY?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Does the implementation of the VONIY include the provision for clinical overrides?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature. The VONIY assessment form does not appear to include a clinical override feature for the youth offending component (see Victorian Juvenile Justice, 2005b). Although it does appear that the provision for a clinical override will be built into the VONIY (Harris, 2004).

*Is there scope to address the reliability and validity of overrides?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Does the implementation of the VONIY incorporate key stakeholders?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature. The development of the VONIY, however, has included key stakeholders (Casey & Day, 2004).

### **What is the timeframe for implementation?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

### **What training /supervision is recommended for the implementation of the VONIY?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

### **Is the VONIY user-friendly?**

Preliminary evidence obtained from staff feedback in the pilot study suggests that the VONIY is considered both “straightforward to administer and score” (Casey & Day, 2004, p. 43). Additionally, the VONIY was considered helpful in terms of assessing a client’s risk level and making decisions regarding levels of interventions (Casey & Day, 2004).

### **Evidence-Base**

#### **What is the evidence-base for the VONIY?**

At this stage, the evidence base of the VONIY is limited to a pilot project. This pilot project was commissioned by the Victorian Government and was conducted by the developers of the tool.

#### **Have evaluations of the risk/needs assessment been transparent?**

To date, only a pilot evaluation examining the reliability of the VONIY has been conducted. At this stage, the results of this research are not in the public domain. No evaluations of the validity of the VONIY have been conducted.

#### **What evidence is there for the reliability of the VONIY?**

Internal Consistency

Preliminary evidence from the pilot project suggests that the internal consistency indicates that the reliability of the VONIY youth offending component is very good (.87). The internal consistency for most of the youth offending subscales ranged from acceptable to good, with the exception of two subscales which fell just below the .6 benchmark (i.e. education, training and employment and peer and community links., see Table 14., Casey & Day, 2004). Evidence for the interscale correlations among subscales are modest (see Table 1., Casey & Day, 2004).

**Table 14: Youth Offending subscale intercorrelations, means, standard deviations, and coefficient alphas (in parentheses)**

Youth Offending subscales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Offending Profile	(.60)							
2. Family Circumstances	.36***	(.74)						
3. Accommodation & Finance	.30***	.51***	(.66)					
4. Substance Use	.42***	.36***	.41***	(.74)				
5. Education, Training, & Emp'ment	.36***	.35***	.32***	.35***	(.56)			
6. Peer & Community Links	.30***	.33***	.33***	.33***	.49***	(.57)		
7. Attitudes & Behaviours	.44***	.42***	.28***	.38***	.51***	.56***	(.74)	
8. Summary Youth Offending								(.87)
Mean	4.37	3.14	1.27	2.87	3.37	2.61	3.67	21.53
Standard Deviation	2.09	1.63	1.14	1.88	1.72	1.24	1.91	7.82

**Source:** Casey & Day, 2004, p. 12.

### **What evidence is there for the validity of the VONIY?**

To date, evaluations of the validity of the VONIY have not been conducted (Casey & Day, 2004).

#### Content Validity

As items included in the Youth Offending component resemble items incorporated in the YLS/CMI and SAVRY, Casey and Day (2004) purport that this provides preliminary evidence for the content validity of the Youth Offending component.

#### Predictive Validity

Some data pertaining to the predictive validity of the RANT (Greville, 2002 in., Thompson & Putnins, 2003) and the YLS/CMI (see results for the YLS/CMI) does exist, however, the validity of the VONIY still requires empirical validation.

### **What are the outcomes of the VONIY in relation to reducing recidivism amongst young offenders?**

To date, no evaluations have been conducted that assess of the outcomes of the VONIY in relation to reducing recidivism amongst young offenders.

### **What is the impact of the VONIY on the quality of the existing Youth Justice Service delivery?**

To date, no evaluations have been conducted that assess the impact of the VONIY on the quality of the existing Youth Justice Service delivery.

### **Describe the applicability of the VONIY to the Australian context**

The VONIY is being developed in Australia and therefore, when validated, will be applicable to the Australian context. As the tool is yet to be evaluated, however, the applicability to the Australian context is unknown.

### **Discuss equity issues regarding special needs groups**

To date, no evaluations have been conducted that assess the validity of the VONIY for special needs groups. However, the Youth Offending component does distinguish between levels of intervention recommended for younger (10 to 14) and older offenders (15-20).

### **Summary**

#### **Strengths**

- The VONIY was developed using an empirical methodology
- The development of the VONIY was theoretically-driven
- The VONIY includes an evaluation of responsivity factors
- The VONIY includes an evaluation of protective factors
- The VONIY samples multiple domains
- Assessment scores are rendered using an actuarial decision-making process
- Preliminary evidence supports the tool being user-friendly
- Preliminary evidence supports the tool possessing internal consistency, content validity and face validity
- The VONIY is grounded in principles of “what works”
- The VONIY can be re-administered upon the completion of a community order or prior to release from secure care (enables tracking of client progress)
- The VONIY is being developed in an Australian context
- The VONIY has an empirical basis (the VONIY was developed from the RANT, which was based on the YLSI)
- The VONIY is designed for both community orders or secure care

#### **Weaknesses**

- As the tool is new, the predictive validity has not yet been established

- The VONIY requires more research regarding the reliability and validity of the tool
- The applicability of the tool for exceptional offender groups is unknown at this stage
- This tool is still in its developmental stages e.g. establishing cut-off points
- The VONIY is not designed for use for pre-sentence reports
- As the VONIY has not been implemented in practice, the implementation of the VONIY cannot be evaluated

### **Conclusions**

Unfortunately, while this tool looks very promising and it has been developed in accordance with best practice principles in risk assessment, the VONIY has only been implemented in pilot mode and the psychometric properties are currently being evaluated. Consequently, it is not recommended for implementation in the Queensland context.

## **Washington State Juvenile Court Assessment (WSJCA) & Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI)**

**Tool:** Washington State Juvenile Court Assessment (WSJCA) & Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI)

### **Description**

#### **What is the purpose of the WSJCA & YASI?**

The WSJCA and YASI serve four primary purposes (Barnoski, 2004; Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999; Orbis Partners, 2005b);

1. To estimate a young offender's likelihood of recidivism so that service delivery can be matched to the level of risk posed. Here, higher-risk youths should receive more intensive services.
2. To identify the presence and absence of risk and protective factors in a young offender's case to drive supervision planning.
3. To assist in the design of case plans which target a young offender's needs, thereby aiming to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors.
4. To assist in reviewing a young offender's progress throughout interventions to monitor changes in targeted risk and protective factors.

Additionally, the YASI software provides a mechanism for the collection of psychosocial epidemiological data of youthful offenders to guide resource allocation and decisions regarding policy and program planning (Orbis Partners, 2005b).

#### **Description of the scales and items of the WSJCA & YASI**

Both the WSJCA and the YASI are comprised of two assessment instruments: a pre-screen instrument and a full assessment instrument.

#### Pre-Screen Assessment

This is an abridged version of the full assessment (Barnoski, 2004). The pre-screen is designed to be administered in a relatively short period of time so that only those offenders who pose a moderate or high risk of recidivism are subjected to more a rigorous assessment utilising the full assessment instrument (Barnoski, 2004; Orbis Partners, 2005b). Young offenders determined to pose a low risk of recidivism are not administered the full assessment and are allocated less intensive services. For the WSJCA, the pre-screen assessment contains 27 items (Barnoski, 2004) and for the YASI the pre-screen contains “about 30 items” (Orbis Partners, 2005b, p. 4). These items are administered as two domains, criminal history and social history, which are combined to classify offenders into levels of risk. The responses for the pre-screen items are also incorporated in the full assessment (Barnoski, 2004).

#### Full Assessment

The full assessment instrument is administered to those young offenders determined to pose either a moderate or high risk of recidivism (Barnoski, 2004; Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999; Orbis Partners, 2005b). The full assessment encompasses both risk and protective factors and static and dynamic factors (Barnoski, 2004). Young offenders are matched to interventions and services on the basis of the level of risk determined by the full assessment. Furthermore, intervention targets are generated from the full assessment (Barnoski, 2004).

The full assessment for the WSJCA includes the following ten domains (Barnoski, 2004; Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999):

1. Criminal History

---

2. School
3. Use of Free Time
4. Employment
5. Relationships
6. Family
7. Alcohol and Drugs
8. Mental Health
9. Attitudes/Behaviours
10. Social Skills

The ten domains for the full assessment for the YASI are almost identical to those incorporated in the WSJCA:

1. Legal History
2. School
3. Use of Free Time
4. Employment
5. Community/peers
6. Family
7. Alcohol/Drugs
8. Mental Health
9. Attitudes
10. Skills

### **How were the WSJCA & YASI developed?**

#### WSJCA

The WSJCA was developed through a mixture of empirical evidence and consensus amongst experts (Barnoski, 2004; Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999). The empirical evidence that informed the WSJCA included:

- Recidivism prediction literature and instruments;
  - Theoretical models for juvenile delinquents
  - Risk and protective factor research
  - Resiliency research; and
  - Research on effective juvenile delinquency programs
- (Barnoski, 2004, p. 2)

From this literature, a draft risk/needs assessment was constructed which was reviewed and evaluated by a number of international experts and juvenile justice professionals (Barnoski, 2004; Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999). Feedback using this consensus approach was utilised to refine the assessment. Subsequent to this, the assessment was subjected to a pilot study evaluation to further refine the assessment (Barnoski, 2004; Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999).

The pre-screen assessment is essentially a revision of Baird's Wisconsin Risk Scale, which has mixed evidence for its predictive validity (see Appendix A., Barnoski, 2004). The method adopted for combining the two domains from the pre-screen assessment (criminal history and social history) was derived from empirical evidence obtained from the Washington State Juvenile Court Early Intervention Program (Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999).

## YASI

According to Orbis and Partners (2005a);

The YASI is based on the Washington model with the same item formats and general features that make the model attractive in juvenile assessment settings. However, the YASI has been modified to reflect differences across jurisdictions. In addition, the YASI uses somewhat fewer items, with

streamlining in some sections. The YASI has a unique format for reporting on the results of the assessment - using the YASI “Wheel”.

The author was unable to locate any research pertaining to the revision of the WSJCA for the development of the YASI.

### **How are the WSJCA & YASI administered?**

The administration of the WSJCA and YASI can be divided into four broad steps. First, a pre-screen assessment is conducted (Barnoski, 2004; Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999; Orbis Partners, 2005b). Young offenders determined to pose a moderate or high risk of recidivism are then administered the full assessment (Barnoski, 2004; Orbis Partners, 2005b). The administration of the full assessment can be considered the second step in the assessment process (Barnoski, 2004; Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999; Orbis Partners, 2005b). Third, re-assessments are conducted that monitor a young offender’s progress throughout interventions and associated changes in targeted risk and protective factors (Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999; Orbis Partners, 2005b). Fourth, a final assessment is conducted at the end of the supervision period (Barnoski, 2004; Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999).

#### **Pre-Screen Assessment**

First, all young offenders are administered the pre-screen assessment. This can be completed following a brief interview and a file review. This assessment is quick to administer and can be considered a “tick and flick” type of assessment. Responses for each of the items on the pre-screen assessment are scored according to a coding guide. The pre-screen items fall into two domains, criminal and social history. The scores in each of these domains are summed to give a criminal history score and a social history score. Scores from these two domains are combined to yield an overall level of risk, including low, moderate and high levels of risk. Young offenders

determined to pose a moderate or high risk of recidivism are administered the full assessment.

#### Full Assessment

The full assessment is completed on the basis of a structured motivational interview. The assessor is advised to conduct an interview with both the young offender and his or her family and to obtain other collateral data where possible. The data gathered from the interview is utilised by the assessor to complete the full assessment, whereby the assessor is required to use their professional discretion and clinical judgement in collating and interpreting the information. The full assessment is scored using the assessor's clinical judgement, whereby domains can be scored according to a scoring guide as static risk factors, static protective factors, dynamic risk factors or dynamic protective factors. These scores can then be utilised to guide service delivery and case planning. The YASI is also capable of producing a computer-generated narrative report summarising the findings for each domain. These reports are being utilised as pre-sentence reports or referral documents for services (personal communication, David Robinson, 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2005).

### **What is the Administration Time for the WSJCA & YASI?**

#### WSJCA

##### Pre-Screen Assessment

The administration time for the WSJCA Pre-Screen Assessment is approximately 30 to 45 minutes (personal communication, Robert Barnoski, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2006). This includes the time require to conduct the interview.

##### Full Assessment

Including the interview, the administration time for the WSJCA Full Assessment is approximately 60 to 90 minutes (Orbis Partners, 2005a)

## YASI

### Pre-Screen Assessment

The administration time for the YASI Pre-Screen Assessment is approximately 15 to 30 minutes (Orbis Partners, 2005a). This includes the time to conduct the interview, however, the administration time may increase if other collateral sources need to be contacted to verify information.

### Full Assessment

Including the interview, the administration time for the YASI Full Assessment is approximately 30 to 60 minutes (Orbis Partners, 2005a).

### **When can/are the WSJCA & YASI employed in the Youth Justice System?**

The WSJCA and YASI can potentially be administered to clients at all stages in the youth justice system, including, but not limited to pre-sentence reports, probation assessments and detention assessments (Barnoski, 2004; Barnoski & VanDieten, 1999; Orbis Partners, 2005a, 2005b).

### **In what jurisdictions has the WSJCA & YASI been implemented?**

#### WSJCA

- Washington (1999)

#### YASI (Orbis Partners, 2005a, 2005b)

- o New York State juvenile probation (New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives; 46 jurisdictions)
- o Illinois juvenile probation (Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts)
- o Illinois status offenders and delinquency prevention services (Illinois Department of Human Services)
- o North Dakota juvenile probation (North Dakota Juvenile Court)

- Michigan
- Ontario
- The YASI may be implemented in a jurisdiction in Scotland in the near future (personal communication, David Robinson, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2005)

### **Implementation Issues**

*Has research indicated that the WSJCA & YASI have been implemented according to the models' principles?*

The authors could not locate research investigating this question specifically. In Washington, however, periodic reviews are conducted of the WSJCA which encourages assessors to administer the assessment according to the principles of the WSJCA (Barnoski, 2004).

*Has there been a demonstrated link between the level of risk determined by the WSJCA & YASI and the services offered?*

The authors could not locate research investigating this issue in the available literature.

*Is there scope to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the WSJCA & YASI within the systems the WSJCA & YASI are embedded?*

The authors could not locate research investigating this issue in the available literature.

*Are there provisions for workload management in the implementation of the WSJCA & YASI?*

Yes. The pre-screen assesses a young offender's level of risk in a relatively short period of time, whereby only those offenders who pose a moderate or high risk of recidivism are subjected to more a rigorous assessment in the full assessment instrument (Barnoski, 2004; Orbis Partners, 2005a, 2005b). This system, based on the triage principle, enables more time to be allocated to those cases that require more intensive services.

*Does the implementation of the WSJCA & YASI include the provision for clinical overrides?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Is there scope to address the reliability and validity of overrides?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

*Does the implementation of the WSJCA & YASI incorporate key stakeholders?*

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

**What is the timeframe for implementation?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

**What training /supervision is recommended for the implementation of the WSJCA & YASI?**

Training is recommended for both the WSJCA and YASI (Barnoski, 2004; Orbis Partners, 2005b). For the YASI, staff training sessions on the administration of the assessment span two days (Orbis Partners, 2005a, 2005b). An additional two days training is provided at a later date that provides guidance for assessors for utilising the YASI for case planning (Orbis Partners, 2005b). A train-the-trainer certification process is also available (Orbis Partners, 2005a, 2005b); this is useful for the purpose of ongoing training.

**Are the WSJCA & YASI user-friendly?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

## Evidence-Base

### **What is the evidence-base for the WSJCA & YASI?**

WSJCA:

Source: Government reports, whereby evaluations were conducted by the developers of WSJCA: Barnoski (2004)

YASI:

Source: Preliminary data provided by Robinson through personal communication.

**Table 15: Evidence Base of the WSJCA and YASI**

Study	n	Sample	Criterion	Follow-up period
(Barnoski, 2004)	Pre-Screen sample n = 16,593 young offenders (20,339 assessments) Full Assessment sample n = 9,692 young offenders (12,187 assessments)	Youth placed on probation	Recidivism: misdemeanor and felony, felony and violent felony.	Eighteen months.
Illinois data	10,464	Youth placed on probation	New police contact and	Eighteen months.

			any negative outcomes (violations, new police contacts and placements)	
New York data	5,448	Youth placed on probation	Negative outcomes (new complaints, violations and placements)	Average follow-up: ten months

**Have evaluations of the WSJCA & YASI been transparent?**

The author identified one study evaluating the WSJCA and two studies evaluating the YASI.

**WSJCA**

The evaluation of the WSJCA was a part of a transparent, accountable process, whereby the method and results of the study are available to the public in a published report. To the authors’ knowledge, no study has been conducted by independent researchers.

**YASI**

To date, the evaluations of the YASI have not been published. To the author’s knowledge, the method and results of the study will be disseminated in the future. To the authors’ knowledge, no study has been conducted by independent researchers.

### **What evidence is there for the reliability of the WSJCA & YASI?**

#### WSJCA

To the author's knowledge, the reliability of WSJCA has not been estimated.

#### YASI

##### Internal Consistency

Robinson (personal communication, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2005) reported that the domains of the Full Assessment have yielded cronbach's alphas between .6 and .7 (acceptable to good). Due to the fact that some of the domains are not uni-dimensional, high cronbach's alphas were not expected nor desired.

### **What evidence is there for the validity of the WSJCA & YASI?**

#### Predictive Validity

##### WSJCA

The WSJCA was validated in research conducted by Barnoski (2004).

##### Pre-Screen Assessment

Support for the predictive validity of the WSJCA Pre-Screen Assessment was computed by correlating the overall risk score with recidivism over an 18 month follow-up period. Here, recidivism was defined as further adjudications. Three types of recidivism were examined: misdemeanour and felony offences, felony offences or violent felony offences. ROC AUC statistics were also computed to assess the predictive validity of the WSJCA Pre-Screen Assessment independent of recidivism base rates.

A correlation between the Pre-Screen Assessment Risk score and all forms of recidivism yielded significant positive relationships (misdemeanour & felony  $r = .23$ ; felony  $r = .21$ ; violent felony  $r = .13$ ). For each form of recidivism, the ROC AUC was .64, indicating moderate predictive power. The felony recidivism rates are illustrated in Table 16. Correlations between the individual pre-screen items and all

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forms of recidivism were also computed. Here, with the exception of one item, each of the individual pre-screen items were significantly correlated with all forms of recidivism in the expected direction. Importantly, the relationship between the Pre-Screen Assessment Risk score and felony recidivism was maintained for both minority and white young offenders, male and female young offenders, across age groups (under 14, 14 to 16 and over 16) and for young sexual offenders.

**Table 16: Pre-Screen assessment validity summary**

	Risk Level			
	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Number of assessments	5880	5817	8642	20339
Percent of sample	28.9%	28.6%	42.5%	100.0%
Misdemeanour and felony recidivism	34.0%	47.8%	61.8%	49.7%
Felony recidivism	11.2%	20.6%	32.2%	22.8%
Violent felony recidivism	2.9%	5.9%	11.0%	7.2%

Source: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004, p. 6.

#### Full Assessment

Support for the predictive validity of the WSJCA Full Assessment was computed by correlating each risk and protective factor domain with felony recidivism over an 18 month follow-up period. Here, felony recidivism yielded moderate correlations (above .1 or below -.1 in the expected direction with nine of the 23 risk and

protective factor domains (see Table 17). Felony recidivism yielded moderate correlations in the expected direction with total static risk, total dynamic risk and total dynamic protective factors. Correlations between the individual pre-screen items and all forms of recidivism were also computed, however, significance levels were not provided (Barnoski, 2004).

**Table 17: Correlations between domain scores and felony recidivism**

Domain	Felony Recidivism			
	Static risk	Static protective	Dynamic risk	Dynamic protective
1. Criminal history	0.18			
2. School	0.13		0.10	-0.05
3. Free time			0.04	-0.05
4. Employment		-0.07		-0.08
5. Relationships			0.13	-0.07
6a. Family history	0.10	0.00		
6b. Current family			0.10	-0.04
7. Alcohol/drugs			0.07	
8. Mental health	0.02		0.04	
9. Attitudes	0.06	-0.03	0.12	-0.11
10. Skills			0.10	-0.09
Total	0.16	-0.05	0.16	-0.12

Source: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004, p. 17.

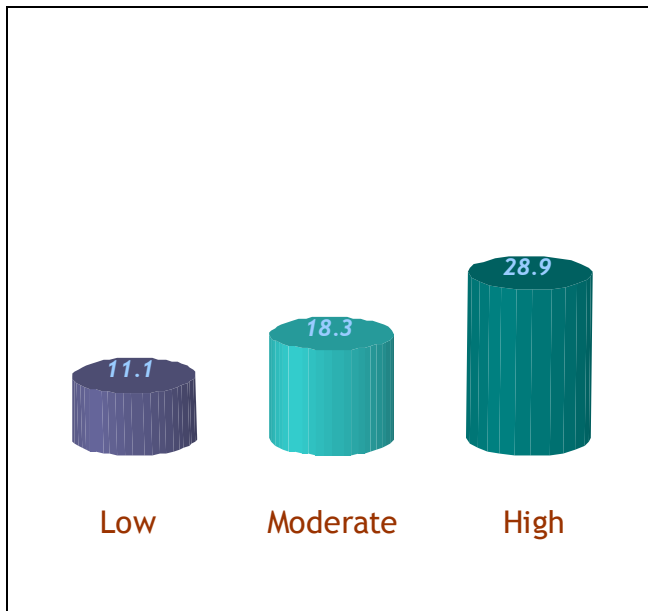
#### YASI

Robinson (personal communication, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2005) provided the authors with some preliminary data supporting the predictive validity of the YASI in a New York and Illinois sample. Importantly, the significance levels were not provided for any of

this data, thus it is impossible to determine whether the differences obtained across risk levels were statistically significant.

#### Pre-Screen Assessment

For the New York sample, young offenders with higher risk scores had higher rates of negative outcomes (new complaints, violations and placements; see Figure 3). This trend was consistent across sex (males and females), age groups (12 and under, 13 to 14, 15 and 16 and older), ethnicity (Black, Caucasian and Hispanic) and county size (small, medium and large).

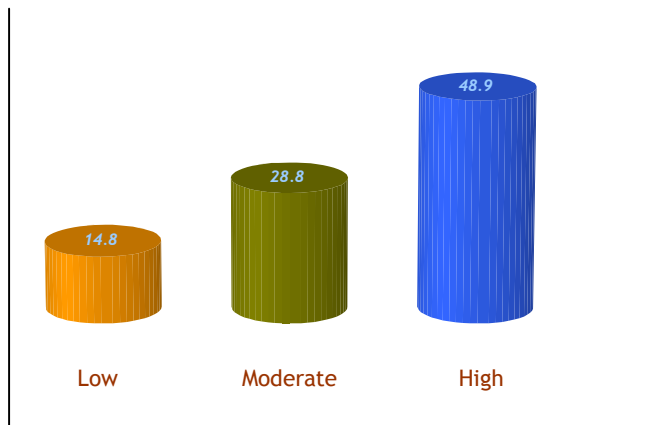


**Figure 3: Negative Outcomes by Pre-Screen Risk Levels % (New Complaints, Violations, Placement)**

Source: Personal communication, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2005

For the Illinois sample, young offenders determined to pose a higher risk had higher rates of new police contacts, police contacts for violent offences and negative outcomes (violations, new police contacts and placements; see Figure 4 and Figure 6).

The trends for new police contact and new police contact for violent offences were consistent across males and females (sex differences were not examined for negative outcomes).

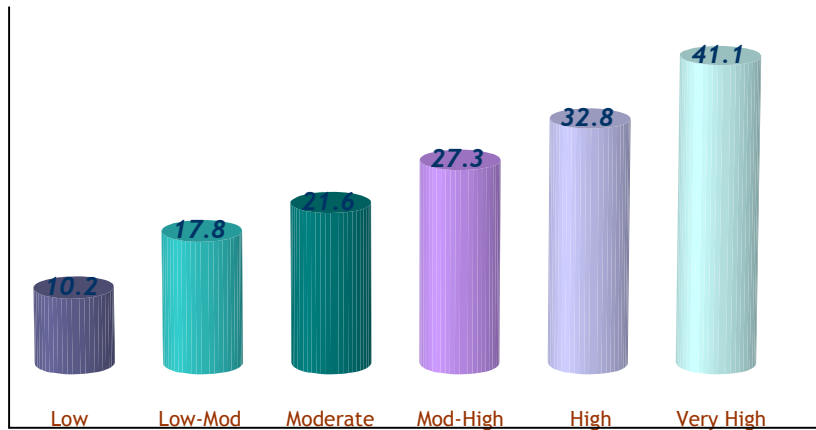


**Figure 4: Percentage of Any Negative Outcomes by YASI Risk Levels (N=10,547) (including violations, new police contacts, placements)**

Source: Personal communication, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2005

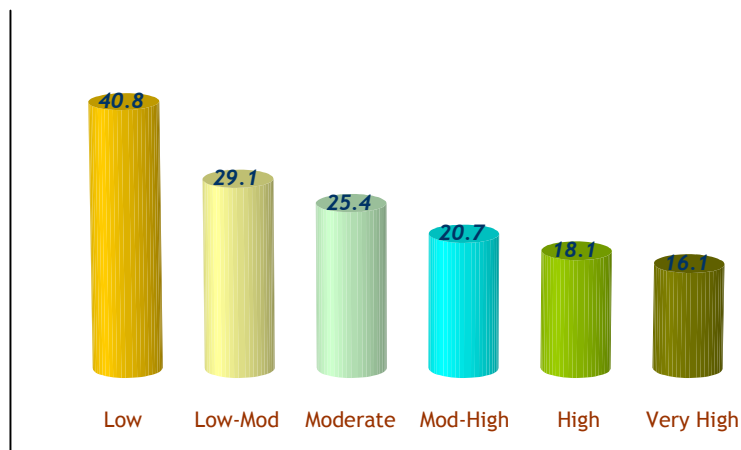
#### Full Assessment

For the New York sample, young offenders with higher levels of dynamic risk had higher rates of negative outcomes (new complaints, violations and placements; see Figure 4). Young offenders with higher levels of dynamic protective factors had lower rates of negative outcomes (see Figure 5 and Figure 6). Trends for changes on re-assessments were also in the expected direction, with negative outcomes lowest for those who exhibited larger decreases in risk scores and negative outcomes highest among those who exhibited increases in risk scores.



**Figure 5: Negative Outcomes by Dynamic Risk Levels (n=2,972)**

Source: Personal communication, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2005



**Figure 6: Negative Outcomes by Dynamic Protective Factor Levels (n=2,972)**

Source: Personal communication, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2005

Construct Validity

Full Assessment

WSJCA

Barnoski (2004) also examined the construct validity of the WSJCA. The results of a factor analysis examining domain scores provided some support for the domains of the WSJCA being independent, although eight of the domains loaded on more than one factor. The results of a factor analysis of the individual items indicated that the majority of domains measure multiple concepts.

**What are the outcomes of the WSJCA & YASI in relation to reducing recidivism amongst young offenders?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

**What is the impact of the WSJCA & YASI on the quality of the existing Youth Justice Service delivery?**

The author was unable to identify research addressing this question in the available literature.

**Describe the applicability of the WSJCA & YASI to the Australian context**

The WSJCA and the YASI are American risk/needs assessment tools. To the author's knowledge, the WSJCA and YASI have not been validated on an Australian sample. Furthermore, to the author's knowledge, there is no evidence of the applicability of these tools in the Australian context.

**Discuss equity issues regarding special needs groups**

Preliminary evidence of WSJCA indicates that the Pre-Screen Assessment is valid for special needs groups, whereby it was validated for minority and white young

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offenders, male and female young offenders, young sexual offenders and across age groups (under 14, 14 to 16 and over 16., Barnoski, 2004).

Preliminary evidence for the YASI indicates that trends for negative outcomes are in the expected direction across sex (males and females), age groups (12 and under, 13 to 14, 15 and 16 and older), ethnicity (Black, Caucasian and Hispanic) and county size (small, medium and large).

## **Summary**

### **Strengths**

- The WSJCA and YASI were developed using an empirical methodology
- The development of both the WSJCA and YASI were theory-driven
- Both the WSJCA and YASI include an evaluation of protective factors
- The WSJCA and YASI sample multiple domains
- The WSJCA and YASI both encourage the use of collateral sources
- Pre-Screen assessment scores are rendered using an actuarial decision-making process
- Preliminary evidence supports the internal consistency of the YASI
- The WSJCA pre-screen possesses moderate predictive validity
- The WSJCA full assessment risk and protective factor domain scores are significantly associated with felony recidivism (8 have moderate correlations → .1 and above or - .1 and below)
- The WSJCA is valid for several exceptional offender groups including: males and females, minority and white, younger v. older and sex offenders
- Preliminary evidence suggests that the recidivism trends for the YASI are in the expected direction. Furthermore, these appear to be maintained across special offender groups

- Both assessments can be used across the youth justice system, including pre-sentence reports, as well as community orders and secure care
- The YASI can produce a narrative that is being used by some jurisdictions as pre-sentence reports
- The WSJCA and YASI are used in a number of jurisdictions, including Washington, New York (46 jurisdictions), Illinois, North Dakota, Berrien County, Michigan.
- The WSJCA and YASI can be re-administered to track client progress
- The triage principle utilised by the WSJCA and YASI reduces workloads and saves time as the pre-screen assessments are relatively quick to administer

### **Weaknesses**

- The WSJCA and YASI do not appear to include an evaluation of responsivity factors
- The effectiveness of the implementation of the WSJCA and YASI have not been evaluated
- There is no evidence is available at this stage for the reliability of the WSJCA and no evidence is available for the test-retest or inter-rater reliability of the YASI
- There is no evidence of the applicability of the WSJCA and YASI to the Australian context
- There is no evidence regarding how user-friendly the WSJCA and YASI are

### **Conclusions**

Despite support for the predictive validity of the WSJCA in the US, there is no evidence for the validity of the WSJCA in the Australian context. Furthermore, the predictive validity of the YASI was presented in a form that did not allow comparisons across studies, whereby the statistical significance of the trends were not

reported. Additionally, no evidence for the test-retest or inter-rater reliability is available for either the WSJCA or the YASI. Consequently, neither the WSJCA nor the YASI are recommended for implementation in the Queensland context.

## **Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) and the Australian adaptation of the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI-AA)**

**Tool:** Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) and the Australian adaptation of the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI-AA)

### **Description**

#### **What is the purpose of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA?**

The YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA are structured assessments designed to estimate a young offender's risk of recidivism and identify his or her criminogenic needs and relevant responsivity factors (Hoge, 2005; Schmidt et al., 2005). Such information is then utilised to guide case management decisions and service delivery (Hoge, 2005; Schmidt et al., 2005; Thompson & Putninš, 2003). Additionally, the information can be utilised to collect psychosocial epidemiological data and monitor service provision (Hoge, 2005). Such data may be important at a policy and programming level. The YLS/CMI can be utilised with young offenders aged between 12 and 17 years (Hoge & Andrews, 2002). The YLS/CMI-AA can be utilised for offenders aged between 12 and 18 years. Although according to Thompson and Pope (in press), in New South Wales, the YLS/CMI-AA is used for young offenders aged between 10 and 18.

#### **Description of the scales and items of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA**

##### **YLS/CMI**

The YLS/CMI is comprised of seven sections: assessment of risks and needs, summary of risks and needs factors, assessment of other needs/special considerations, assessor's assessment of the juvenile's general risk/need level, contact level, case management plan and case management review (Hoge & Andrews, 2002).

*Part I: Assessment of Risks and Needs*

The Assessment of Risks and Needs component is comprised of 42 items that assess both risk factors for recidivism and criminogenic needs of young offenders (Hoge, 2005). The Assessment of Risks and Needs component is divided into eight domains (Hoge, 2005; Hoge & Andrews, 2002):

1. prior and current offences
2. family circumstances/parenting
3. education/employment
4. peer associations
5. substance abuse
6. leisure/recreation
7. personality/behaviour
8. attitudes/orientation

*Part II: Summary of Risk/Needs Factors*

The *Summary of Risk/Needs Factors* component summaries the risk and need factors assessed in Part I (Hoge & Andrews, 2002). This involves the computation of scores for each of the eight domains, in addition to an overall risk index (Hoge, 2005). These scores are then used to classify young offenders as low, moderate, high or very high risk (Hoge, 2005; Hoge & Andrews, 2002).

*Part III: Assessment of Other Needs/Special Considerations*

The *Assessment of Other Needs/Special Considerations* component identifies whether a client has special needs which may need to be taken into consideration for case planning (Hoge, 2005; Hoge & Andrews, 2002). The inclusion of this component satisfies the responsivity principle (Hoge, 2005). The *Assessment of Other Needs/Special Considerations* assesses factors relating to the young offender, the young offender's family and those relating to institutional adjustment (Hoge, 2005).

#### *Part IV: Assessor's Assessment of the Juvenile's General Risk/Need Level*

As suggested by the name of this component, Part IV entails the assessor classifying the young offender into a risk/need level on the basis of all of the information gathered (Hoge, 2005; Hoge & Andrews, 2002). This component was included to enable the assessor to override the risk/need level determined by Part II if it was deemed necessary. However, all overrides must be accompanied by an explanation documented in the young offender's assessment (Hoge, 2005). Consequently, the assessor necessarily exercises some professional judgement in determining a young offender's overall risk level (Hoge, 2005).

#### Part V: Contact Level

The Contact Level component requires the assessor to determine the level of service deemed suitable for the young offender on the basis of his or her general risk/need level (Hoge & Andrews, 2002). Assessor's are guided by the principle that "intensive services should be reserved for high-risk cases and less intensive services for low-risk cases" (Hoge, 2005, p. 286).

#### Part VI: Case Management Plan

The Case Management Plan should identify the goals that will be targeted in the young offender's case plan (Hoge, 2005; Hoge & Andrews, 2002). These goals should be consistent with the criminogenic needs identified in Part I (Hoge, 2005). Additionally, the strengths and responsivity factors identified in the previous sections should guide case planning (Hoge, 2005).

#### Part VII: Case Management Review

As the title suggests, this component is utilised to review a young offender's progress.

## YLS/CMI-AA

The YLS/CMI-AA is very similar to the YLS/CMI. The YLS/CMI-AA, however, contains 47 items in Part I (Assessment of Risks and Needs), including three questions that assess a young offender's strengths (protective factors., Thompson & Putninš, 2003). Although the YLS/CMI-AA does not contain all of the subsections in addition to Part I and Part II of the YLS/CMI, the YLS/CMI-AA does include provisions for the remaining sections through its operational guidelines. To illustrate, the YLS/CMI-AA contains a "prompt to consider other factors" (Thompson, personal communication, 18 January, 2006), this is similar to Part III of the YLS/CMI. The inclusion of this prompt, and the recommendation to combine this information with the YLS/CMI-AA score, satisfies the responsivity principle. The types of other needs or special considerations recommended to assess include;

- Support needs in relation to low intellectual ability and adaptive functioning
  - Specific assessment of risk (e.g., for sexual or violent offending)
  - Detailed assessment of substance use
  - Psychological or psychiatric assessment
  - Motivation for change.
- (Department of Juvenile Justice New South Wales, 2002, p. 15)

Similar to part IV of the YLS/CMI, the YLS/CMI-AA also has the provision for a clinical override, whereby ultimately, the assessor is accountable for the decision. Here, it is advised that, in the context of additional pertinent information, the assessor only increases the risk score. Assessors are not advised to reduce risk ratings (Department of Juvenile Justice New South Wales, 2002). Similar to Parts VI and VII of the YLS/CMI, the YLS/CMI-AA includes guidelines for linking YLS/CMI-AA scores to case management plans. Additionally, the necessity of re-assessments at various points in a youth's case is outlined in the operational guidelines (Department of Juvenile Justice New South Wales, 2002). Although the contact level is not currently based on YLS/CMI-AA scores (Thompson, personal communication, 18

January, 2006), the operational guidelines state that regional staff should “Recognise the need for variation of minimum standards for supervision, when warranted, on the basis of overall risk levels identified via the YLS/ CMI-AA and collateral information” (Department of Juvenile Justice New South Wales, 2002, p. 16). Consequently, it appears that the provision for contact level to vary as a function of YLS/CMI-AA scores is underway.

### **How were the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA developed?**

#### **YLS/CMI**

The YLS/CMI is an actuarial scale, whereby the items included have been demonstrated to be empirically and theoretically associated with recidivism and youthful offending (Hoge, 2005; Hoge & Andrews 2002 cited in Wilson & Rolleston, 2004). The YLS/CMI was derived from a risk/needs assessment for adult offenders, the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R., Hoge, 2005; Schmidt et al., 2005). The LSI-R is a risk/need assessment with much support for its psychometric properties (Hoge, 2005; Thompson & Putninš, 2003). Preceding the YLS/CMI was the Youth Level of Service Inventory (YLSI., Hoge, 2005). This first attempt at developing a youth version of the LSI-R assessed variables empirically associated with juvenile offending and resulted in a risk/need assessment with 112 items (Simourd, Hoge, Andrews, & Leschied, 1994). Through empirical investigation into the psychometric properties of the YLSI, it was discovered that of all the YLSI items, 42 were repeatedly found to have significant relationships with recidivism (Andrews, Robinson, & Balla, 1986; Simourd, Hoge & Andrews, 1991 in Hoge, 2005; Shields & Simourd, 1991; Simourd et al., 1994). Consequently, a risk/needs assessments tool was developed utilising these 42 items; this constitutes Part I of the YLS/CMI (Hoge, 2005). The factors assessed in the 42 item YLS/CMI, however, are still very similar to those assessed in the LSI-R (Flores et al., 2003).

## YLS/CMI-AA

The YLS/CMI-AA is also an actuarial scale, derived from the YLS/CMI (Thompson, 2003). Although the YLS/CMI-AA is very similar to its parent version, several changes were made to Part I and Part II in its development, including;

- 1) revisions in language to reflect the New South Wales context (e.g., “custodial order” replaced “detention”, “supervised order” replaced “probation”, “wags and misses classes” replaced “missing school days or skipping classes”,
- 2) inclusion of several new items that were empirically or conceptually related to relevant risk domains (e.g, “age at first court order” because of the link between early onset of offending and recidivism, “homelessness” because of its relevance to family circumstances and risk/need considerations, “occasional alcohol use” so that degree of use could be evaluated consistent with the existing drug use items),
- 3) revising the item related to prior probation with an item concerning the outcome and nature of the first court order,
- 4) tightening the operational definition of selected items (the meaning and parameters of various items were specified further and a number of these clarifications have been included in the commercialised version),
- 5) minor reorganisation of items in some domains to improve the logical flow (e.g., personality items followed by behaviour items rather than mixed together),
- 6) the addition of three items to identify major strengths that may operate as protective factors,
- 7) printing operational definitions of all items on the inventory rather than in a separate manual (Thompson & Pope, in press, p .6).

Importantly, items that comprise the YLS/CMI-AA have been empirically demonstrated to be significantly associated with youthful offending in Australian adolescents (J. Baker, 1998; Weatherburn & Lind, 1996, 2001).

### **How are the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA administered?**

#### YLS/CMI

The YLS/CMI Assessment of Risks and Needs form (Part I) is completed by front-line staff following a semi-structured interview with the young offender (Hoge, 2002).

It is advised that assessors also conduct a file review and interviews with other sources for supplementary information (Hoge, 2005). Utilising this data, each of the 42 items applicable to the client's case are scored as present (0) or absent (1., Hoge, 2005; Schmidt et al., 2005). If a domain is considered a strength in the young offender's circumstances, this is also noted (Hoge, 2005). In Part II, the items that apply to the client's case are scored and summed to give a total risk score, ranging between 0 and 42 (Hoge, 2005; Schmidt et al., 2005). These scores are matched with an overall risk/need level; including low (0-8), moderate (9-22), high (22-34) and very high (35-42) risk (Hoge, 2005). In addition to an overall risk/need score, subscale scores are also generated for each of the eight domains (Hoge, 2005). Here, score ranges differ in accordance with the number of items incorporated in the domain. The YLS/CMI can be scored utilising either a paper and pencil or computer-based format (Hoge & Andrews, 2002). Importantly, however, the tool requires a professional with level B qualifications to be held responsible for the use, interpretation and communication of the YLS/CMI, although trained frontline staff can administer the tool (Hoge, 2005).

#### YLS/CMI-AA

The YLS/CMI-AA is scored in a similar fashion as the YLS/CMI; although one of the items encompassed in the YLS/CMI-AA is not dichotomous, whereby age at first court order is scored on a 3-point scale (Thompson, 2003). The YLS/CMI-AA is scored utilising a computer-based format (Thompson & Putninš, 2003), although the YLS/CMI-AA can be printed out and completed by hand if so desired. It is advised that clients are re-assessed every six months (Thompson & Pope, in press; Thompson & Putninš, 2003).

## **What are the Administration Times for the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA?**

### YLS/CMI

Including the interview and file review, the YLS/CMI has been reported to be conducted in an average of 65 minutes (Flores et al., 2003). Excluding the interview and file review, the YLS/CMI has been reported as being conducted in between 20 to 30 minutes (Hoge, 2005).

### YLS/CMI-AA

Excluding the interview, the YLS/CMI-AA has been reported as being conducted in between 10 to 15 minutes (personal communication, Rachel Upperton, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2006). Here, assessors are advised not to complete the YLS/CMI-AA in the presence of the young offender (Department of Juvenile Justice New South Wales, 2002).

## **When can/are the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA employed in the Youth Justice System?**

### YLS/CMI

The YLS/CMI can be administered to clients at all stages in the youth justice system, including (Hoge, 2005; Hoge & Andrews, 2002);

- pre-trial detention
- pre-adjudicatory diversion
- disposition/sentencing
- waivers to an adult court
- waivers to the mental health system
- case planning (both in secure care and community placements)
- post-adjudication dispositions

### YLS/CMI-AA

The YLS/CMI-AA can be administered to clients in both secure care and on community supervision orders (Thompson & Putninš, 2003). Here, it is mandatory to

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conduct a YLS/CMI-AA assessment on young offenders on a supervised order or control order (Department of Juvenile Justice New South Wales, 2002). The YLS/CMI-AA can also be administered at the practitioner's discretion at other points in the juvenile justice system (Department of Juvenile Justice New South Wales, 2002). The YLS/CMI-AA should also be administered to review a young offender's progress and at the end of an order (Department of Juvenile Justice New South Wales, 2002).

### **In what jurisdictions have the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA been implemented?**

#### YLS/CMI

The YLS/CMI is the most widely used risk/needs assessment in Canada (Hannah-Moffat & Maurutto, 2003), implemented in jurisdictions such as New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Yukon (Hannah-Moffat & Maurutto, 2003). The YLS/CMI is also used in many jurisdictions in the USA, such as the State of Nebraska, Maine and Minnesota (personal communication, Bryan Minhinnett Multi-Health Systems, 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2006). The YLS/CMI is also implemented in New Zealand. Additionally, the development of a number of risk/needs assessments has been influenced by the YLS/CMI and items included in this assessment, for example, the VONIY, SB ARA and GRAD.

#### YLS/CMI-AA

- New South Wales

### **Implementation Issues**

*Has research indicated that the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA has been implemented according to the model's principles?*

#### YLS/CMI

In a study conducted by Flores and colleagues (2003) which surveyed 195 assessors over three sites, almost 90% reported that they did not administer the YLS/CMI.

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Furthermore, 78.5% reported having never administered the YLS/CMI. For those assessors who did administer the YLS/CMI, the risk score was typically utilised as a mechanism for determining the level of intensity of services provided to clients. The YLS/CMI domain scores, however, were typically not utilised in goal-setting and nor were they utilised to guide the types of treatment provided to clients. In contrast to the principles of the YLS/CMI, assessors tended to utilise a standard set of treatment goals and recommended a standard set of treatment programs. Furthermore, only a minority of assessors re-assessed clients to track treatment progress. In sum, the findings of Flores and colleagues (2003) indicates that in the three sites surveyed, the YLS/CMI has not been implemented in accordance with its principles.

#### YLS/CMI-AA

The author was unable to access this information in the available literature.

*Has there been a demonstrated link between the level of risk determined by the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA and the services offered?*

#### YLS/CMI

As stated above, in a study conducted by Flores and colleagues (2003), evidence from three sites indicated that the risk score were typically utilised to determine the level of intensity of services provided to clients. The domain scores, however, typically were not utilised in goal-setting and nor as a guidance for treatment provision.

#### YLS/CMI-AA

The author was unable to access this information in the available literature.

*Is there scope to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA within the system the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA is embedded?*

The author was unable to access this information in the available literature.

The author was unable to access this information in the available literature.

*Are there provisions for workload management in the implementation of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA?*

The author was unable to access this information in the available literature.

*Does the implementation of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA include the provision for clinical overrides?*

As stated previously, assessors are permitted to use their clinical judgement to override the overall risk/need score determined by the YLS/CMI or YLS/CMI-AA risk and needs assessment. All clinical overrides of YLS/CMI scores, however, must be accompanied by an explanation documented in Part IV: Assessor's Assessment of the Juvenile's General Risk/Need Level (Hoge, 2005; Hoge & Andrews, 2002). Additionally, in relation to the YLS/CMI-AA, clinical overrides are only permitted for increasing a young offender's risk score. Assessors are not advised to reduce risk ratings (Department of Juvenile Justice New South Wales, 2002).

*Is there scope to address the reliability and validity of overrides?*

The author was unable to access this information in the available literature

*Does the implementation of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA incorporate key stakeholders?*

YLS/CMI

The implementation of the YLS/CMI encompasses an orientation program for key stakeholders (Hoge, 2005).

YLS/CMI-AA

The author was unable to access this information in the available literature.

### **What is the timeframe for implementation?**

The author was unable to access this information in the available literature.

### **What training /supervision is recommended for the implementation of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA?**

#### **YLS/CMI**

Assessors are required to be trained in the administration and scoring of the YLS/CMI prior to conducting the assessments (Hoge, 2005; Thompson & Putninš, 2003). Furthermore, booster training sessions should be provided periodically. The YLS/CMI can be administered by youth justice officers. However, it is advised that a professional with B level qualifications “assume responsibility for the use, interpretation and communication of the results” (Hoge & Andrews, 2002, p. 1).

#### **YLS/CMI-AA**

Assessors are required to be trained in the administration and scoring of the YLS/CMI-AA prior to conducting the assessments (Thompson & Putninš, 2003). The YLS/CMI-AA can be administered by youth justice officers or youth justice counsellors (Department of Juvenile Justice New South Wales, 2002).

### **Is the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA user-friendly?**

#### **YLS/CMI**

Flores and colleagues (2003) assessed the user-friendliness of the YLS/CMI by surveying 195 practitioners across three sites. The feedback obtained from these surveys indicated that assessors did not believe the YLS/CMI was easy to use. Here, a mean rating of 4.87 on a scale between one and ten was obtained, with ten representing the very easy end of the continuum. Furthermore, these assessors did not believe the YLS/CMI was necessary for their decisions. It is likely that these perceptions influenced the low rates of YLS/CMI use and the decision by many practitioners not to use the YLS/CMI to guide treatment plans. The poor rating of

user-friendliness, however, may be a reflection of the fact that over 40% of practitioners who used the YLS/CM had not received the necessary training in its administration and scoring (Flores et al., 2003).

#### YLS/CMI-AA

Preliminary evidence for the usability was provided via personal communication with Rachel Upperton (18<sup>th</sup> January, 2006) on the basis of a number of interviews with juvenile justice officers after a trial period in the New South Wales Department of Juvenile Justice. In general, the YLS/CMI-AA was perceived to be relatively easy to use.

Some preliminary findings included:

Positive feedback:

- No officers believed the YLS/CMI-AA was difficult to use
- Many officers believed the YLS/CMI-AA was useful for quickly assessing a young offender's level of risk
- Many officers believed the YLS/CMI-AA was thorough
- Many officers believed the YLS/CMI-AA improved consistency
- Many officers believed the YLS/CMI-AA was beneficial for case management
- Many officers believed the YLS/CMI-AA provided a useful framework for assessing client changes
- Many officers believed the YLS/CMI-AA was useful for providing a theoretical framework for client assessments

Negative feedback:

- Some officers believed the tool was restraining (this is a common criticism of risk/needs assessments in general., Ferguson, 2002; Maupin, 1993; Young et al., 2006)

- Some officers believed the tool was too subjective
- Some officers believe that client information was not always available to complete the tool (this is a common criticism of risk/needs assessments in general)(Ferguson, 2002)
- Some officers believed there was a need to cover mental health issues that were not assessed by the YLS/CMI-AA
- Some officers believed that the administration of the YLS/CMI-AA did not result in the collection of information of sufficient depth to guide case management plans

Importantly, the above findings are preliminary, whereby Upperton (personal communication, 18 January, 2006) is still in the process of data analysis.

### **Evidence-Base**

#### **What is the evidence-base for the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA?**

YLS/CMI

Source: Refereed Journal Articles:

Jung & Rawana (1999)

Schmidt and colleagues (2005)

Marczyk, Heilbrun, Lander, & DeMatteo (2003)

Catchpole & Gretton (2003)

Source: Doctoral Thesis:

Rowe (2002 cited in Hoge, 2005)

Source: Masters Thesis:

Costigan (1999 cited in Hoge, 2005)

Jung (1996 cited in Hoge, 2005)

Source: Government Report:

Flores and colleagues (2003)

Wilson & Rolleston (2004), New Zealand

Source: Conference Presentation

Hoge & Andrews (1996 cited in Hoge, 2005)

Schmidt, Hoge & Robertson (2002 cited in Hoge, 2005)

Poluchowicz, Jung & Rawana (2000 cited in Hoge, 2005)

YLS/CMI-AA

Source: Refereed Journal Articles:

Thompson & Pope (in press)

Source: Conference Presentation

Upperton & Thompson (2005)

### **Have evaluations of the risk/needs assessment YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA been transparent?**

A number of studies have been conducted to assess the implementation, usability and psychometric properties of the YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA. These evaluations were part of a transparent, accountable process, whereby the method and results of the research are in the public domain, with many studies published in peer-reviewed journals. Some of these studies are independent (e.g., Flores et al., 2003), while many of the studies have been conducted by the test developers.

### **What evidence is there for the reliability of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA?**

YLS/CMI

### Inter-Rater Reliability

Several studies have evaluated the inter-rater reliability of the YLS/CMI. Overall, this evidence indicates that the inter-rater reliability for the YLS/CMI is between the upper-end of fair and excellent (see Table 18).

**Table 18: Evidence base for the reliability of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA**

Tool	Study	N	How Assessed	Results
YLS/CMI	(Schmidt et al., 2005)	107	Comparison of ratings between probation officers and mental health teams	ICC: between .71 (attitudes/orientation) and .85 (education/employment). There was one exception to this: peer relations (.61).
	(Marczyk et al., 2003)	95	Unsure	ICC = .82
	(Catchpole & Gretton, 2003)	n = 21	Unsure	ICC = .80
	(Schmidt, Hoge & Robertson, 2002 cited in Hoge, 2005)	29	Comparison across two independent raters	Inter-rater agreement for subscales between $r = .61$ to $r = .85$ (median $r = .76$ )
	(Poluchowicz, Jung & Rawana, 2000 cited in Hoge, 2005)	33	Comparison across two independent raters	Interrater agreement coefficient for overall score = .75. Median interrater agreement coefficient for subscales $r = .70$ (range = .05 to .92). Interrater agreement coefficient adequate for all subscales except leisure/recreation. Excluding leisure/recreation, range = .50 to .92.

### Internal Consistency

Several studies have computed the internal consistency of the YLS/CMI and one study has calculated the internal consistency for the YLS/CMI-AA. This evidence indicates that the internal consistency for the majority of YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA domains is between acceptable to good, with some domains exhibiting very good internal consistency. A few domains, however, fell below the benchmark for acceptability in some studies (see Table 19).

**Table 19: Internal Consistency for the YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA**

Tool	Study	N	Results
YLS/CMI	(Schmidt et al., 2005)	107	Cronbach's alpha between .56 (substance abuse) to .77 (attitudes/orientation). All domains (except substance abuse above .6)
	(Jung & Rawana, 1999)	263	Cronbach's alpha between .62 (substance abuse) to .93 (total).
	(Rowe, 2002 cited in Hoge, 2005)	408	Coefficient alpha for overall risk/need score = .91. Mean coefficient alpha across domains = .72
	(Schmidt, Hoge & Robertson, 2002 cited in Hoge, 2005)	114	Mean coefficient alpha = .69
YLS/CMI-AA	(Thompson & Pope, in press)	290	Coefficient alpha for overall risk/need score = .91. Coefficient alpha for domains ranged between .69 to .79 with three exceptions (prior and current offences [.56], peer relations [.45] and major strengths [.50]; although major strengths are not computed for an overall risk/needs score)

Item-total correlations were evaluated in one study assessing the YLS/CMI (Jung & Rawana, 1999) and one study assessing the YLS/CMI-AA (Thompson & Pope, in press). For the YLS/CMI, all item-total correlations ranged between .31 and .80 (Jung & Rawana, 1999). For the YLS/CMI-AA, 43 of the item-total correlations fell between .30 and .67 (Thompson & Pope, in press). In sum, with the exception of a few items in the YLS/CMI-AA, the item-total correlations of the YLS/CMI and the YLS/CMI-AA appear to be good.

#### Test-Retest Stability

The authors could not locate any research evaluating the test-retest stability of the YLS/CMI. One such study was identified for the test-retest stability of the YLS/CMI-AA. Thompson and Pope (in press) computed the test-retest stability for the YLS/CMI-AA, with an average retest period of five months. This study estimated the test-retest stability for the overall risk/needs score to be good (.79). The stability coefficients yielded for each of the subscale scores ranged from fair (.61) to good (.85). For major strengths, the test-retest stability was estimated to be fair (.67).

Caution must be taken when interpreting the test-retest stability results, however, as changes in scores over time may have been due to real change (i.e. improvement or deterioration) in the areas assessed, rather than due to error of measurement. Improvement overtime, for example, would be expected after the provision of treatment. Despite this, the test-retest stability scores are close to what would be deemed acceptable for test-retest reliability indices computed over a short period of time, which tend to fall between .80 and .90 (Gregory, 2000).

## **What evidence is there for the validity of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA?**

### Predictive Validity

Numerous studies have been conducted which evaluate the predictive validity of the YLS/CMI (see Table 20). Much of this research supports the predictive validity of the YLS/CMI. Although research conducted by Marczyk and colleagues (2003) did not support the predictive validity of the YLS/CMI, this study had a limited sample of serious offenders and relied exclusively on retrospective file data which may have resulted in less accurate information. Consistent with this, Upperton and Thompson (2005, p. 1) state that “[Marczyk and colleagues] results may be interpreted as underscoring threats to validity in unique samples with sub-optimal assessment information”. Overall, this research indicates that the YLS/CMI has good predictive validity.

To date, two studies have evaluated the predictive validity of the YLS/CMI-AA (Thompson & Pope, in press; Upperton & Thompson, 2005). Although both of these studies support the predictive validity of the YLS/CMI-AA, in the latter study the predictive power of the YLS/CMI-AA was not superior to that of clinical judgements. One difference between actuarial and clinical classifications, however, was that the YLS/CMI-AA classified more offenders as posing a lower risk, while the clinical judgements classified more offenders as posing a higher risk. Consequently, the YLS/CMI-AA may be superior in regards to avoiding net-widening, this may be important for those ‘adolescent-limited’ type of offenders (Krysiak & LeCroy, 2002; Moffitt, 1993). Despite the lack of significant differences between actuarial and clinical predictions, the YLS/CMI-AA resulted in a strong ROC AUC, which is comparable to other widely used risk/needs assessment tools. In sum, preliminary evidence supports the predictive validity of the YLS/CMI-AA (see Table 20).

**Table 20: Predictive Validity YLS/CMI and the YLS/CMI-AA**

Tool	Study	Criterion	Results
YLS/CMI	(Hoge & Andrews, 1996 cited in Hoge, 2005) n = 338	New charges, new convictions and charges for serious offences	Significant positive <b>correlations</b> for overall risk/need score and recidivism and subscale scores and recidivism.
YLS/CMI	(Rowe, 2002 cited in Hoge, 2005) n = 408	New charges, new convictions and charges for serious offences	Significant positive <b>correlations</b> for overall risk/need score and recidivism (for males and females) and subscale scores and recidivism.  Using a <b>survival analysis</b> , young offenders classified as high risk on the YLS/CMI re-offended faster than their low-risk counterparts.  Young offenders whose overall YLS/CMI scores increased from intake to discharge had <b>significantly higher rates</b> of recidivism than those whose scores decreased or remained stable.
YLS/CMI	(Schmidt, Hoge & Robertson, 2002 cited in Hoge, 2005) n = 114	New charges, new convictions and charges for serious offences	Significant positive <b>correlations</b> for overall risk/need score and recidivism (not for females, although was a small sample) and most subscale scores and recidivism (excluding prior convictions and substance abuse).  YLS/CMI scores <b>correctly predicted</b> 57% of general re-offending and 56% of serious re-offending.
YLS/CMI	(Jung & Rawana, 1999) n = 263	Compared those who re-offended within six months to those who did not re-offend within six months	The offending group had <b>significantly higher</b> overall and subscale scores (for males and females; Native and Non-Native Canadians).  Entering the eight domain scores into a linear <b>discriminant analysis</b> correctly

			classified 75.38% of young offenders.
YLS/CMI	(Costigan, 1999 cited in Hoge, 2005) n = 195	Re-offending (follow-up of Jung & Rawana's (1999) study	Offenders assessed as higher risk (comparing low, moderate and high risk) on overall and subscale scores had <b>significantly higher</b> levels of re-offending (for males and females; Native and Non-Native Canadians).
YLS/CMI	(Schmidt et al., 2005) n = 107	Re-offending, serious re-offending, number of new offences, time to new offence	<p>Significant positive <b>correlations</b> for overall risk/need score and re-offending, serious re-offending and number of new offences (for males, only serious re-offending for females). Significant negative <b>correlations</b> for overall risk/need score and time to re-offend (for males and females).</p> <p>Offenders assessed as higher risk (comparing low, moderate and high risk) on overall scores committed <b>significantly higher</b> numbers of new offences (no significant difference between low and moderate risk groups).</p> <p>Offenders assessed as higher risk (comparing low, moderate and high risk) on overall scores committed offences in <b>significantly shorter</b> periods of time (no significant difference between moderate and high risk groups).</p> <p>Young offenders assessed as higher risk had <b>significantly higher</b> rates of re-offending, serious re-offending and offended in shorter periods of time (for males and females).</p> <p><b>ROC AUC</b> for overall risk/needs scores for serious re-offending was .67 and for all re-offending was .61.</p> <p><b>ROC AUC</b> for risk classifications for serious re-offending was .65 and for all</p>

			re-offending was .56.
YLS/CMI	(Marczyk et al., 2003) n = 95	New charges	YLS/CMI scores did not identify young offenders that were more likely to recidivate (i.e. new charges).
YLS/CMI	(Catchpole & Gretton, 2003) n = 74	General re-offending (including violent) and violent re-offending	<p><b>ROC AUC</b> for overall risk/needs scores for general re-offending was .74. (similar ROC AUCs were found for SAVRY and PCL:YV)</p> <p><b>ROC AUC</b> for overall risk/needs scores for violent re-offending was .73. (similar ROC AUCs were found for SAVRY and PCL:YV)</p> <p>Using a <b>survival analysis</b>, young offenders classified as high risk (high and very high combined) on the YLS/CMI re-offended faster than their low-risk (low and moderate risk) counterparts.</p>
YLS/CMI	(Flores et al., 2003) n = 1679		<p><b>Logistic regression analyses</b> indicated that the YLS/CMI scores significantly predicted re-arrest (for males and females; for “whites” and “non-whites”).</p> <p>Higher scores on the YLS/CMI were associated with a <b>significantly higher</b> rates of institutional violations, technical violations, re-arrests, re-arrests for serious offences and re-incarceration (this held for males and females and “whites” and “non-whites”, with the exception of institutional violations for females and re-incarceration for “non-whites”. Although these relationships were not always significant for all criteria across three different sites, however, significant correlations were maintained for the majority of the criteria.</p> <p>Please note: Caution must be taken in</p>

			interpreting the results of this study as evaluations indicated that the YLS/CMI was not always implemented according to its guidelines.
YLS/CMI-AA	(Thompson & Pope, in press) n = 174	Re-offending (minimum of six months follow up, whereby follow-up periods varied)	Significant positive <b>correlations</b> for overall risk/need score and re-offending.  No significant relationship between total strength score and re-offending.  <b>ROC AUC</b> for overall risk/needs scores for re-offending was .67.
YLS/CMI-AA	(Upperton & Thompson, 2005) n = 121	New criminal conviction (excluding breach of current order)	Significant positive <b>correlations</b> for overall risk/need score and new criminal conviction (not significantly different to unstructured clinical judgements).  Significant <b>correlations</b> for strength score and new criminal conviction.  <b>ROC AUC</b> for overall risk/needs scores for new criminal conviction was .75 (not significantly different to unstructured clinical judgements).

#### Concurrent Validity and Convergent Validity

##### YLS/CMI

Several studies have demonstrated a significant relationship with the YLS/CMI and several measures assessing similar criterion, including;

- The Child Behaviour Checklist (both parent and youth versions) (Schmidt et al., 2002 cited in Hoge, 2005; Schmidt et al., 2005)
- PCL:YV (Catchpole & Gretton, 2003; Rowe, 2002 cited in Hoge, 2005; Wilson & Rolleston, 2004)
- SAVRY (Catchpole & Gretton, 2003)
- CATS (Rowe, 2002 cited in Hoge, 2005)
- RSYO (Wilson & Rolleston, 2004)
- RoC\*RoI (Wilson & Rolleston, 2004)

These studies may be interpreted as providing evidence for both the concurrent validity and the convergent validity of the YLS/CMI.

#### YLS/CMI-AA

The author was unable to identify research investigating the concurrent or convergent validity of the YLS/CMI-AA.

#### Construct Validity

##### YLS/CMI

Two studies investigating the construct validity of the YLS/CMI were identified (Hoge & Andrews 1996 & Jung, 1996 cited in Hoge, 2005). Here, YLS/ CMI scores were demonstrated to differentiate between the intensity of young offender's custody levels (Hoge & Andrews 1996 cited in Hoge, 2005) and between adjudicated offenders and high school students with no juvenile justice record. Significant positive correlations were also found for overall risk/need scores and total convictions and criminal versatility scores in a New Zealand sample. However, this latter study also found a significant negative correlation between overall risk/need scores and total sex convictions and no significant correlation was identified for total violent convictions and overall risk/need score (Wilson & Rolleston, 2004).

Consequently, in the New Zealand sample, while construct validity was established for general offending, it was not established for violent re-offending and had an opposite relationship with sexual offending.

#### YLS/CMI-AA

The author was only able to identify one study examining the construct validity of the YLS/CMI-AA (Thompson & Pope, in press). The results of this study provided some support for the eight domains of the YLS/CMI-AA, although 12 principal components were identified which accounted for 61.72% of the variance.

#### **What are the outcomes of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA in relation to reducing recidivism amongst young offenders?**

The author was unable to access this information in the available literature.

#### **What is the impact of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA on the quality of the existing Youth Justice Service delivery?**

The author was unable to access this information in the available literature.

#### **Describe the applicability of the YLS/CMI & YLS/CMI-AA to the Australian context**

The YLS/CMI-AA has been validated and implemented in an Australian population (i.e., New South Wales Thompson & Pope, in press; Thompson & Putninš, 2003; Upperton & Thompson, 2005). Consequently, the YLS/CMI-AA can be considered applicable to the Australian context. As populations may differ from New South Wales to Queensland, however, the YLS/CMI-AA would still require norming to be undertaken in the Queensland youth justice system.

## **Discuss equity issues regarding special needs groups**

### YLS/CMI

The YLS/CMI has been validated for both males and females and Native and Non-Native Canadians (Flores et al., 2003; Costigan, 1999 & Rowe, 2002 & Schmidt et al., 2002 cited in Hoge, 2005; Jung & Rawana, 1999; Schmidt et al., 2005). It is important to note, however, that some studies have not supported the validity of the YLS/CMI across these special needs groups (see Table 20., Schmidt et al., 2002 cited in Hoge, 2005; Schmidt et al., 2005).

### YLS/CMI-AA

Research data investigating equity issues for special needs groups and the YLS/CMI-AA is being analysed. Here, Thompson (personal communication, 18 January, 2006) stated “I don’t think that there will be a very strong case for bias- although this is a complex issue. There is likely to be subgroup differences such as Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal or male[s] versus females but [of] a low magnitude”.

## **Summary**

### **Strengths**

- The YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA were developed using an empirical methodology
- The development of both the YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA were theory-driven
- The YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA both include an evaluation of responsivity factors (through directing assessors to consider these factors)
- The YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA both include an evaluation of protective factors
- The YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA both sample multiple domains

- The YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA both encourage the use of collateral sources
- Assessment scores of both the YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA are rendered using an actuarial decision-making process
- Both the YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA incorporate the provision for clinical overrides
- Evidence supports fair to good internal consistency, test-retest and inter-rater reliability for the YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA
- Both the YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA possess good predictive validity
- The YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA also possess good construct validity
- The YLS/CMI possesses good convergent and concurrent validity
- The YLS/CMI-AA has been validated on an Australian sample
- The YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA can be used across the juvenile justice system
- The YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA can be re-administered to track client progress
- Evidence supports the validity of the YLS/CMI for exceptional offender groups including: males and females, white and non-white youth and violent recidivism as well as general recidivism (studies conducted overseas)
- Preliminary evidence suggests that the YLS/CMI-AA is unlikely to be biased for Indigenous Australian adolescent offenders
- The YLS/CMI is the most widely used youth justice risk/needs assessment in Canada
- Preliminary evidence suggests that the YLS/CMI-AA is user-friendly in the Australian context

## **Weaknesses**

- Evidence does not suggest that the YLS/CMI is always utilised according to its principles
- Staff feedback indicated that the YLS/CMI was not perceived to be easy to use in a US sample
- Further evidence is required to evaluate the validity of the YLS/CMI-AA for exceptional offender groups in Australia

## **Conclusions**

The YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA reflect state of the art risk/needs assessment. The YLS/CMI and YLS/CMI-AA both have demonstrable reliability and validity, whereby for the YLS/CMI-AA such data was obtained using Australian data. Although every study does not support the predictive validity of the YLS/CMI, the weight of the evidence is such that the predictive validity of the YLS/CMI can be considered supported. Although definitive data is not available for the YLS/CMI-AA for special needs groups, the parent version was indicated to be valid across both males and females and Native and Non-Native Canadians. Although US data suggested that the YLS/CMI was not user-friendly, preliminary data from NSW supports the tool as being easy to use. Together, the weight of this evidence, when compared to alternative risk/needs assessment tools, has led the authors to recommend the YLS/CMI-AA for implementation in the Queensland context.

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### Appendix A: Screening Table One

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
<b>Alameda County Placement Risk Assessment (To be part of a structured decision making system, California)</b>	Yes	Risk Assessment	Yes	No: Requires better assessment of reliability  (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2000)	Yes:  Predictive validity <sup>a</sup>  (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2000)	Yes
<b>Arizona Juvenile Risk/Needs Assessment Instrument</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Inter-rater reliability  (LeCroy et al., 1998)	Mixed:  Predictive validity  (Ashford & LeCroy, 1990; Krysik & LeCroy, 2002; LeCroy et al., 1998)	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Arkansas risk assessment instrument</b>	Yes	No: Risk Assessment	Yes	No evidence available	No  Predictive validity poor  (Benda, Corwyn, & Toombs, 2001a)	Yes
<b>ASSET</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Inter-rater Reliability <sup>a</sup> (but limited)  (K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker, Jones, Roberts, & Merrington, 2000)	Yes:  Predictive validity (K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker et al., 2000)	Yes
<b>Carlson Psychological</b>	Yes: Is a personality	No: Needs	No: Dynamic factors	Yes:	Yes:	No: Is a personality

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Survey</b>	assessment, although it does assess needs			Test-retest reliability (Benda et al., 2001a, 2001b; Carlson, 1972a, 1972b, 1973)  Internal consistency (Benda et al., 2001a, 2001b; Carlson, 1972a, 1972b, 1973)	Construct validity (Benda et al., 2001a)  Predictive validity (Benda et al., 2001b)	assessment
<b>Child &amp; Adolescent Taxon Scale (CATS)</b>	Yes	No	No	Yes:  Internal consistency (Skilling, Quinsey, & Craig, 2001)	Yes:  Convergent validity (PCL:YV) (Skilling et al., 2001)	No: is a substitute for the PCL-R to measure psychopathy (Prescott, 2004; Quinsey, Harris,

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
						Rice, & Cormier, 1998)
<b>Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS)</b>	Yes	No: For clinical purposes- not a risk assessment  (Hoge, 2002)	Yes	Yes:  Inter-rater reliability  Test-retest reliability  Internal consistency  (Hodges & Wong, 1996; Hodges, Wong, & Latessa, 1998; Hoge, 2002)	Yes:  Predictive validity  Construct validity  Concurrent validity  Discriminant validity (inpatients higher than alternative care and outpatients)  (Hodges & Wong, 1996;	No (for clinical purposes- not as a risk assessment )  (Hodges et al., 1998)

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
					Hodges et al., 1998; Hoge, 2002)	
<b>Child and Adolescent Risk for Violence (CARV) Or Now called Child and Adolescent Risk Evaluation (CARE)</b>	Yes (although for behavioural acting-out or assaultive behaviour rather than general recidivism)  (Seifert, Phillips, & Parker, 2001)	Yes (Seifert et al., 2001)	Yes (Seifert et al., 2001)	Yes:  Internal consistency  Split-half reliability  (Seifert, 2005a, 2005b)	Yes:  Concurrent validity (Seifert et al., 2001)  Predictive validity (Seifert, 2005a, 2005b; Seifert et al., 2001)  Discriminant validity (Seifert, 2005b)  Construct validity	Yes (although for behavioural acting-out or assaultive behaviour rather than general recidivism)

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
					(Seifert, 2005a)	
<b>Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL)</b>	Can be used to assess needs re: emotional and behavioural functioning	No	No	Yes:  (see., Lambert et al., 2003; LeBlanc, 2000)	Yes:  (see., LeBlanc, 2000)  Convergent validity (Schmidt et al., 2005)	No: Is a clinical tool designed to measure children's behavioural and emotional functioning- but it does include delinquent behaviour and aggressive behaviour.
<b>Community Adolescent Psychosocial Screening</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No evidence of the reliability has been collected of the CAPS, however,	Yes:  Preliminary evidence for	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>(CAPS)</b>				research supports the reliability of the SECAPS. As the CAPS is a shortened version of the SECAPS, the reliability of the SECAPS can be used as a guide (personal communication, Putnins, 3 <sup>rd</sup> January, 2006).	the predictive validity (for the CAPS recidivism risk index).  (Personal communication , Putnin, 16 November, 2005 ., Putnins, 2005b)	
<b>Contra Costa Risk Assessment Instrument</b>	Yes	Risk Assessment	Yes	No evidence available	No:  Predictive validity poor  (Ashford & LeCroy, 1990)	Yes
<b>Devereux Adolescent NS Child Behavior Rating Scales</b>	Yes	The author could not locate this information	The author could not locate this information	Yes  (Seifert, 2005c)	Yes  (Seifert, 2005c)	No: Assesses/P rofiles Behavior

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
						Problem Areas
<b>Dispositional Risk Assessment Instrument</b>	Yes	No: Risks	Yes	No evidence was available	Yes: Predictive validity (Huff, 1999)	Yes
<b>Division for Juvenile Justice Services Risk and Needs Assessment</b>	Yes	Yes (Jensen & Vance, 2004)	Yes	Assessed in pilot stage although results not reported. Assessment still in developmental stages  (Jensen & Vance, 2004)	In developmental stages	Yes
<b>Domestic Violence Inventory-Juvenile (DVI-J)</b>	Yes	Yes (Davignon, 2003)	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency  (Davignon, 2003)	Yes:  Convergent validity  Discriminant	Yes: for those convicted of domestic violence.

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
					validity Concurrent validity Postdictive validity (Davignon, 2003)	Needs to be combined with other data. "...help[s] evaluate violence prone offenders, substance (alcohol and other drugs) abusers, controlling individuals and the emotionally disturbed. [DVI-J] can be used to

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
						<p>measure the severity of domestic violence offender problems in judicial, correctional and probation systems” (Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003a, p. 1).</p> <p>(Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003a; Seifert et al., 2001)</p>

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Early Assessment Risk List for Boys: EARL-20B</b>	Yes	Yes  (Earlscourt Child and Family Centre, 2005)e	Yes	Yes:  Inter-rater reliability  (Kogel, Augmeri & Webster, 2000)	Yes:  Predictive validity  (Kogel, Augmeri & Webster, 2000)	Yes
<b>Early Assessment Risk List for Girls: EARL-20G</b>	Yes	Yes  (Earlscourt Child and Family Centre, 2005)	Yes	Borum (2003) reports that results of an unpublished study indicate good psychometric properties	No:  Predictive validity  (Levene et al., 2004)	Yes
<b>Estimate of risk of adolescent sexual offence recidivism (ERASOR)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Inter-rater agreement  Item-total correlation  Internal	Yes:  Discriminant validity  (Worling, 2004)	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
				consistency (Worling, 2004)		
<b>Experimental risk assessment device</b>	Yes	Risk Assessment	Yes	No evidence available	Preliminary evidence for predictive validity  (Visher, Lattimore, & Linster, 1991)	Yes
<b>First Offender Risk Assessment Index (FORAI)</b>	Yes	Risk Assessment	Yes	No evidence available	Yes:  Predictive validity  (Risler, Sutphen, & Shields, 2000)	Yes
<b>Global Risk</b>	Its primary	Yes	Yes	Yes:	Yes:	No; its

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
<b>Assessment Device (GRAD)</b>	purpose is to assess threats to developmental needs and areas of need that require intervention (Gavazzi, Yarcheck, & Lim, 2005). Although the utilisation of the GRAD as a means to identify high risk juveniles has been the focus of very recent research (Gavazzi, Yarcheck, Sullivan, &	(Sereika, 2005)		Internal consistency and goodness of fit of factor structure  (Gavazzi, Slade et al., 2003)	Predictive validity regarding the allocation to appropriate services. (Gavazzi, Lim, Yarcheck, & Eyre, 2003). Preliminary evidence suggests that several domains have some predictive power (Gavazzi, Yarcheck, Sullivan et al., 2005).  concurrent	primary purpose is to assess threats to developmental needs and areas of need that require intervention (Gavazzi, Yarcheck, & Lim, 2005). Although preliminary evidence suggests that several domains have some predictive power

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
	Jones, 2005).				validity (Gavazzi & Lim, 2003)	(Gavazzi, Yarcheck, Sullivan et al., 2005).
<b>Gluecks' social prediction table</b>	Yes	No	Yes	No evidence available	Mixed:  Predictive validity mixed  (Jones, Harris, Fader, Burrell, & Fadeyi, 1999; Putnins, 2005; Veverka, 1971)	Predicts delinquency
<b>Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC) Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI)</b>	Yes	No: Risk assessment	Yes	No:  Internal consistency poor  Item-total correlation low  (Lemmon & Calhoon, 1998)	No:  Predictive validity poor  (Lemmon & Calhoon, 1998)	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Iowa Juvenile Court Intake Risk Assessment</b>	Yes	No: Risk	Yes	No evidence was available	Yes: Predictive validity (Huff, 1999; Huff & Prell, 1996)	Yes
<b>Jesness Inventory</b>	Yes: Is a personality classification scheme although can inform re: risk and treatment needs.  (Violence Institute of	No: Needs  (Violence Institute of New Jersey, 2002)	No: Dynamic risk factors	Yes:  Internal consistency (Benda et al., 2001a, 2001b; Jesness, 1991a, 1991b)  Test-retest reliabilities:	Yes:  Discriminant validity (distinguishes delinquents from non-delinquents) (Benda et al., 2001a; Jesness, 1991a, 1991b)	No: is a personality classification scheme  (Pinsoneault, 1997)

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
	New Jersey, 2002)			(Benda et al., 2001a; Jesness, 1991a, 1991b)	Predictive validity (Benda et al., 2001b; Jesness, 1991a, 1991b)	
<b>JSORRAT-II</b>	Yes	No: Risk	Yes (although almost factors are static)	No evidence available	Yes  (Epperson, Ralston, Fowers & Dewitt, 2005 cited in Seifert, 2005a)	Yes  (sexually and for males only)
<b>Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment (JDRA)</b>	Yes	No: Risk  (Withrow, 2003)	Yes (assesses social and familial circumstances as mitigating factors)	No evidence available	Yes:  Predictive validity  (Withrow, 2003)	Yes
<b>Juvenile Offender Parent Questionnaire</b>	Yes	Yes: Although it <i>assesses the</i>	Yes	Yes:  Internal	Yes:  Predictive	Yes- through strengtheni

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>(JOPQ)</b>		<i>needs: of parents</i> (which are also protective factors for young offenders).		consistency (C. C. Rose et al., 2004)	validity (Glaser et al., 2005)	ng parental protective factors. Is a supplementary assessment completed by parents of youths.
<b>Juvenile Presentence Evaluation (JPE)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency (Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003b)	Yes:  Discriminant validity  Concurrent validity  Postdictive validity  (Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003b)	Yes: but not solely-assesses: risk of violence (one scale), resistance attitudes, substance abuse, emotional and mental health problems

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
						(Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003b)
<b>Juvenile Pretrial Test (JPT)</b>	Yes	Yes  (Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003c)	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency  (Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003c)	Yes:  Discriminant validity  Concurrent validity  Postdictive validity  (Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003c)	Yes: but not solely → assesses: risk of violence, substance abuse, adjustment, emotional and mental health problems (Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003c)
<b>Juvenile Sex Offender Assessment</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes  (Prescott,	Yes:  Inter-rater	Yes:  Construct	Yes  (Prescott,

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
<b>Protocol (J-SOAP) and J-SOAP-II</b>			2004)	reliability, internal consistency  (Prentky & Righthand, 2003; Righthand et al., 2005; Seifert, 2005a)	validity  Predictive validity (not prospective), convergent validity (with YLS/CMI)  Concurrent validity  Postdictive validity  Discriminant validity  (see., Prentky & Righthand, 2003; Righthand et al., 2005; Seifert, 2005a;	2004)

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
					Worling, 2004)	
<b>Langstrom and Grann's "Tentative Four-Factor Risk Index", 2000</b>	Yes	No: Risk	Yes	No evidence available	Yes: Predictive validity: but has not been cross-validated yet.  (Langstrom & Grann, 2000; Prescott, 2004)	Yes (Prescott, 2004)
<b>Life Challenges Questionnaire-Teen Form (LCQ-TF) and the Risk Assessment Index (RAI)</b>	Yes	No: Risk  (Grinberg, Dawkins, Dawkins, & Fullilove, 2005)	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency  (Grinberg et al., 2005)	Yes:  Discriminant validity  (Grinberg et al., 2005)	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Los Angeles County Probation Department's Risk and Needs Assessment Instruments</b>	Yes (although not implemented across the LA system and the tool was poorly documented. , Turner, Fain, & Sehgal, 2005)	Yes	Yes	In developmental stages: some evidence for Cronbach's Alpha  (Turner & Fain, 2003)	In developmental stages: some evidence for Predictive Validity  (Turner & Fain, 2003)	Yes
<b>Maryland Risk Assessment</b>	Yes	No: Risk	Yes	No evidence available	No:  Predictive validity not reported in a format that allows comparisons (statistical significance not indicated)  (Wiebush ,	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
					Johnson & Wagner, 1997 in., Schwalbe et al., 2004)	
<b>Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI) &amp; MAYSI-11</b>	Yes	No: Screening tool used to identify symptoms of mental/emotional disturbance or distress	Yes	Yes: Item-homogeneity  Item-total correlations  Test-retest reliability  (Grisso & Barnum, 1998 in., Marczyk et al., 2003)	No:  Predictive validity (Marczyk et al., 2003)  Yes: Convergent validity (Heilbrun, Cottle, & Lee, 2000)	No: Is Designed to assess youths with special mental health needs  Website: <a href="http://www.umassmed.edu/nysap/maysi2">http://www.umassmed.edu/nysap/maysi2</a>
<b>Measuring Adolescent Social and personal Adaptation in</b>	Yes	No: designed to assist treatment planning	Yes  (LeBlanc, 2000)	Yes:  Reliability  (LeBlanc 1996 in.,	Yes:  Concurrent validity	Yes: but focus is on treatment planning v. risk/needs

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Quebec (MASPAQ)</b>		(LeBlanc, 2000)		LeBlanc, 2000)	Discriminant validity (known groups of offenders and protected youth)  Predictive validity  (LeBlanc 1996 in., LeBlanc, 2000)	assessment  (LeBlanc, 2000)
<b>Michigan OCYS/Delinquency Risk Assessment Scale and Needs Assessment Scale (Mendoza &amp; Birkbeck, 1996)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No evidence Available	Yes: Predictive validity  (Seifert et al., 2001) (Witt & Dyer, 1997)	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Multiphasic Sex Inventory II - Adolescent Female Form (MSI-II-Adolescent Female Form)</b>	Yes	The author could not locate this information	Yes	No evidence available  (Nichols and Molinder, 2005a)	No evidence available  (Nichols and Molinder, 2005a)	Yes
<b>Multiphasic Sex Inventory II - Adolescent Male Form (MSI-II-Adolescent Male Form)</b>	Yes  (Nichols and Molinder, 2005b)	The author could not locate this information	Yes	Yes:  Coefficient alphas  (Nichols and Molinder, 2005b)	No evidence available	Yes
<b>National Council on Crime and Delinquency Model Risk Assessment Instrument and Model Needs Assessment Instrument</b>	Yes	Yes (two assessments)  (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, 2002)	Yes	No evidence provided  (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, 2002)	Yes:  Predictive validity for the Model Risk Assessment (although this was not presented in a format which	Yes

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
(Structured Decision Making System)					<p>allowed comparisons with other instruments.</p> <p>Construct validity: it does contain items included in many validated instruments and therefore this provides preliminary evidence of construct validity (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, 2002)</p>	

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Nebraska Risk Assessment in (Schwalbe et al., 2004)</b>	Yes	No: Risk	Yes	No evidence Available	No:  Predictive validity not reported in a format that allows comparisons (statistical significance not indicated)  (Wagner, 1995 in., Schwalbe et al., 2004)	Yes
<b>North Carolina Assessment of Risk (NCAR)</b>	Yes	No- risk  (Schwalbe et al., 2004)	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency (Schwalbe et al., 2004)	Mixed:  Not good predictive validity among substance users and inconsistent	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
					across sex and ethnicity  (Schwalbe et al., 2004)	
<b>Offender Risk Assessment and Management System (ORAMS) (PRA)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No:  Currently under completion	No:  Currently under completion  Initial results indicate that the sexual abuse tool is not valid  (Hannah-Moffat & Maurutto, 2003)	Yes
<b>Orange County Risk Assessment</b>	Yes	No	Yes	No evidence Available	No:  Predictive	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Instrument (California)</b>					validity poor  (Ashford & LeCroy, 1990; Sharkey et al., 2003)	
<b>Problem-Oriented Screening Instruments for Teenagers (POSIT)</b>	Yes	Yes  (Flores et al., 2003; LeBlanc, 2000)	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency and test-retest stability  (Dembo, Schmeidler et al., 1996; Flores et al., 2003; LeBlanc, 2000; McLaney, Del Boca, & Babor, 1994)	Yes:  Postdictive validity and concurrent validity and convergent validity and construct validity  (Dembo, Turner, Borden, Schmeidler, & Manning, 1994; Dembo, Turner,	No: Used more as a case management instrument or to decide who requires more in depth assessment  (Flores et al., 2003)

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
					Schmeidler, Sue, & Borden, 1996; LeBlanc, 2000; McLaney et al., 1994)	
<b>Protective Factors Scale (PFS)</b>	Yes	Yes  (Prescott, 2004)	Yes  (Prescott, 2004)	Still in developmental stages	Still in developmental stages, although there is some initial support for its validity  (Prescott, 2004)	Yes: but should not be used in isolation from other risk assessments  (Prescott, 2004)
<b>Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version (PCL:YV)</b>	Yes	No: addresses clinical construct psychopathy; although psychopathy is a risk	No	Yes:  Internal consistency  Item homogeneity  Inter-rater	Yes:  Predictive validity  (Forth, 1995 cited in Forth & Burke, 1998)	No: should be used in conjunction with other risk factors and purpose built

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
		factor (Hare, 2002)		reliability (Forth, Hart, & Hare, 1990) (Forth, 1995 cited in Forth & Burke, 1998) (Laroche, 1996 cited in Forth & Burke, 1998) (Bailey, 1994 cited in Forth & Burke, 1998) (Kosson, 1996 cited in Forth & Burke, 1998) (Forth, 1995 cited in Forth & Burke, 1998; Kosson, Cyterski, Steuerwald, Neumann, & Walker-Matthews, 2002; Skeem & Cauffman, 2003; Skilling et al., 2001).	(Gretton, Hare, & Catchpole, 2004; Gretton, McBride, Hare, O'Shaughnessy, & Kumka, 2001) (Kosson et al., 2002; Marczyk et al., 2003; Skeem & Cauffman, 2003)  Yes:  Convergent validity (e.g. SAVRY; YLS/CMI): (Catchpole & Gretton, 2003; Kosson et al., 2002; Wilson & Rolleston,	instrument s

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
					2004)  Mixed: Construct validity (Kosson et al., 2002)	
<b>Residential Adolescent Psychosocial Screening (RAPS)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No evidence of the reliability has been collected of the RAPS, however, research supports the reliability of the SECAPS. As the RAPS is a clone of the SECAPS, the reliability of the SECAPS can be used as a guide (personal communication, Putnins, 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Yes:  Predictive validity  (Personal communication , Putnin, 16 November, 2005 ., Putninš, 2005b)	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
				January, 2006).		
<b>Risk of Re-Conviction x Risk of Re-imprisonment model (RoC*RoI) New Zealand</b>	Yes	Risk	Static factors  (Wilson & Rolleston, 2004)	No evidence Available	No:  Predictive validity  Yes:  Convergent validity (total convictions, criminal versatility and violent convictions)  Concurrent Validity  (Wilson & Rolleston, 2004)	Yes
<b>Risk Screen for Youth</b>	Yes	Risk	Static Factors (thesis)	No evidence Available	No:	Yes (identify)

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Offenders (RSYO) (New Zealand)</b>					Predictive validity  Yes:  Convergent validity (total convictions and criminal versatility)  Concurrent Validity  (Wilson & Rolleston, 2004)	life-course persistent)
<b>San Diego County (CA) Risk and Resiliency Checkup (SDRRC)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Item-total correlations indicate the possibility of redundancy among subscales	Yes:  Predictive validity (although the SDRRC does not have set	Yes

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
				(Turner et al., 2005)	cut-points, thus inhibiting “meaningful evaluations of false positives and false negatives” (Turner et al., 2005, p. 33)). SDRRC operates differently for different subgroups → not as accurate for Hispanic youths and some domains are not predictive for certain subgroups (Turner et al., 2005).	

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Santa Barbara Assets and Risks Assessment (SBARA)</b>	Yes	Yes  (personal communication Shane Jimerson, 28 <sup>th</sup> December, 2005)	Yes	Yes:  Inter-rater reliability  Internal consistency  (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004)	Yes:  Construct validity (as indicated by the fact that items are correlated with recidivism)  Convergent validity  Predictive validity (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004)	Yes
<b>Secure Care Psychosocial Screening (SECAPS)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Test-retest  Internal	Yes:  Predictive validity	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
				consistency (Putninš, 2004)	Convergent validity  (Putninš, 2004; Putnins, 2005)	
<b>Sexual Adjustment Inventory-Juvenile (SAI-Juvenile)</b>	Yes	Yes  (Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003d)	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency  (Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003d)	Yes:  Concurrent validity  (Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003d)	Yes: but not solely → assesses: risk of sexual adjustment, child molest, sexual violence, incest, exhibitionism, violence (lethality), substance (alcohol and drugs)

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
						abuse, antisocial behaviors, distress and judgment problems (Behavior Data Systems Inc, 2003d)
<b>Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency (Bartel, Forth & Borum, 2004)  Inter-rater reliability (Catchpole & Gretton, 2003)	Yes:  Concurrent validity: (Catchpole & Gretton, 2003) (Catchpole & Gretton)  Criterion validity: (Bartel, Borum & Forth, 2002;	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
					Fitch, 2002; Gretton & Catchpole, in press; Lodewijks, 2002; McEachran, 2001), (McEachran, 2001; Gretton & Abramowitz, 2002)  Predictive validity (Catchpole & Gretton, 2003) Gretton & Abramowitz, 2002)	
<b>The Behavioural Objective Sequence in</b>	Yes: is not a risk assessment but it does	No: Needs	No: Dynamic factors	Yes  (Wilder, Braaten, Wilhite, &	Yes:  Concurrent validity	No: Is not a risk assessment but it does

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>(Seifert et al., 2001)</b>	identify needs			Algozzine, 2005)	(Wilder et al., 2005)	identify needs
<b>The Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI)</b>	Yes	No: Risk	Static factors	Could not locate evidence pertaining to the reliability of the DRAI	Yes: Concurrent validity Discriminant Validity Construct validity  (Dembo, Turner, Schmeidler, Borden, & Manning, 1994; Office of State Courts Administrator, 2003a)	To make decisions regarding whether a young offender should be detained or released.

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>The Missouri Juvenile Risk Assessment Scale and The Missouri Juvenile Needs Assessment Scale</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No evidence available  (K. Johnson & Wagner, 2001; K. Johnson, Wagner, & Matthews, 2002; Office of State Courts Administrator, 2003b, 2005)	Yes <sup>a</sup>  (K. Johnson et al., 2002)	Yes
<b>Victorian Offending Needs Indicator for Youth (VONIY) (Youth Offending component)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes  Preliminary Evidence  (Casey & Day, 2004)	Yes:  Construct Validity (Casey & Day, 2004)	Yes
<b>Virginia Risk Assessment (Schwalbe et al., 2004)</b>	Yes	No- Risk	Yes	No evidence available	No: Predictive validity not reported in a	Yes

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
					<p>format that allows comparisons (statistical significance not indicated)</p> <p>(Wiebush , Wagner &amp; Ehrlich, 1999 in., Schwalbe et al., 2004)</p>	
<p><b>Washington State Juvenile Court Risk Assessment</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No evidence available</p>	<p>Yes:</p> <p>Predictive validity</p> <p>Construct validity</p> <p>(Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004)</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Wisconsin Juvenile Probation and Aftercare Assessment Form &amp; Wisconsin Delinquency Youth Need Assessment</b>	Yes	Yes  (Putninš, 2004)	Yes	No evidence available	Mixed:  Predictive validity  (Ashford & LeCroy, 1988, 1990; Lemmon & Calhoun, 1998; Putninš, 2004; Seifert et al., 2001; Witt & Dyer, 1997)	Yes
<b>YLS/CMI-AA (Australian Adaptation)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency (Thompson & Pope, in press; Thompson & Putninš, 2003)  Test-retest stability (Thompson &	Yes:  Predictive validity (Thompson & Pope, in press; Upperton & Thompson)  Construct Validity	Yes

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
				Pope, in press; Thompson & Putninš, 2003)  Item-total correlations (Thompson & Pope, in press)	(Thompson & Pope, in press)	
<b>Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI)</b>	Yes	Yes  (Orbis Partners, 2005b)	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency  (personal communication, David Robinson, 6 <sup>th</sup> December, 2005)	Predictive validity not reported in a format that allows comparisons (statistical significance not indicated)  (personal communication , David Robinson, 6 <sup>th</sup> December, 2005)	Yes

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
<b>Youth Competency Assessment (YCA) Portland, Oregon</b>	Yes (in conjunction with existing risk assessments)	No (is an assessment of strengths)  (Mackin, Weller, & Tarte, 2004)	No	No evidence available  (personal communication, Juliette Mackin, 13 <sup>th</sup> January, 2006)	No:  Predictive Validity  Yes:  Face & Content Validity  (Mackin et al., 2004)  Only pilot testing and preliminary research has been conducted	Indirectly: Goals → repair harm, assist pathways towards health identity, connect the individual to their community, family and peers (Mackin et al., 2004)
<b>Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency (Hoge,	Yes:  Predictive validity	Yes

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static and dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending
(YLS/CMI)				<p>2005; Jung &amp; Rawana, 1999; Schmidt et al., 2005)</p> <p>Inter-rater reliability (Catchpole &amp; Gretton, 2003; Hoge, 2005; Marczyk et al., 2003; Schmidt et al., 2005)</p> <p>Item-total correlations (Jung &amp; Rawana, 1999)</p> <p>Alpha reliability analysis revealed removal of some questions would increase alpha for</p>	<p>(Catchpole &amp; Gretton, 2003; Flores et al., 2003; Jung &amp; Rawana, 1999; Marczyk et al., 2003; Schmidt et al., 2005)</p> <p>Convergent validity (Catchpole &amp; Gretton, 2003; Schmidt et al., 2005; Wilson &amp; Rolleston, 2004) Jack, 2000 in (Catchpole &amp; Gretton, 2003)</p> <p>Concurrent validity (Catchpole &amp;</p>	

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
				many of components (Flores et al., 2003)	Gretton, 2003; Hoge, 2005)  Construct validity (Hoge, 2005)	
<b>Youth Management Assessment Instrument</b>	Yes	No: Risk	No	No evidence available	Yes:  Predictive	Yes
<b>Youth Psychopathic Traits Inventory (YPI)</b>	Yes	No: addresses clinical construct psychopathy; although psychopathy is a risk factor  (Skeem & Cauffman,	No	Yes:  Internal consistency  Test-retest reliability  (Skeem & Cauffman, 2003)	Yes:  Convergent validity (with PCL-YV), discriminant validity (with anxiety) and predictive validity (institutional infractions)	No

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static and dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>
		2003)			(Skeem & Cauffman, 2003)	

<sup>a</sup> Indicates that there were important methodological problems in the associated research.

Validity Codings:

- Yes: majority of evidence supports its validity
- Mixed- some evidence supports and some does not support its validity
- No- research not conducted or available research does not support its validity

## Appendix B: Screening Table Two

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static &amp; dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>	<b>Qualifications/Prerequisites</b>
<b>ASSET</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Inter-rater reliability <sup>a</sup> (but limited)  Internal consistency  (K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker et al., 2000)	Yes:  Predictive validity  Construct validity  (K. Baker et al., 2005; K. Baker et al., 2000)	Yes	No
<b>Child and Adolescent Risk for Violence (CARV) Or Now called CARE</b>	Yes (although for behavioural acting-out or assaultive)	Yes  (Seifert et al., 2001)	Yes  (Seifert et al., 2001)	Yes:  Internal consistency  Split-half reliability	Yes:  Concurrent validity (Seifert et al., 2001)	Yes (although for behavioural acting-out or assaultive)	Violence

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresse s both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static &amp; dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>	<b>Qualificatio ns/Prerequi sites</b>
	behaviour rather than general recidivism )  (Seifert et al., 2001)			(Seifert, 2005a, 2005b)	Predictive validity (Seifert, 2005a, 2005b; Seifert et al., 2001)  Discrimina nt validity (Seifert, 2005b)  Construct validity (Seifert, 2005a)	behaviour rather than general recidivism)	
<b>Early Assessment Risk List for Boys: EARL-20B</b>	Yes	Yes  (Earlscourt Child and Family Centre,	Yes	Yes:  Inter-rater reliability  (Kogel, Augmeri &	Yes:  Predictive validity  (Kogel, Augmeri &	Yes	Under 12 years  Violent offenders

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresse s both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static &amp; dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>	<b>Qualificatio ns/Prerequi sites</b>
		2005)e		Webster, 2000)	Webster, 2000)		
<b>Juvenile Offender Parent Questionnaire (JOPQ)</b>	Yes	Yes: Although it <i>assesses the needs: of parents</i> (which are also protective factors for young offenders)	Yes	Yes: Internal consistency (C. C. Rose et al., 2004)	Yes: Predictive validity (Glaser et al., 2005)	Yes- through strengthening parental protective factors. Is a supplementary assessment completed by parents of youths.	Assesses needs of the parent. To be used as a supplementary assessment.
<b>Juvenile Sex Offender Assessment Protocol (JSOAP)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes (Prescott, 2004)	Yes: Inter-rater reliability Internal consistency (Prentky & Righthand, 2003;	Yes: Construct validity Predictive validity (not prospective ) Convergent validity	Yes (Prescott, 2004)	Sex Offenders

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static & dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending	Qualifications/Prerequisites
				Righthand et al., 2005; Seifert, 2005a)	(with YLS/CMI) Concurrent validity Postdictive validity Discriminant validity  (see, Prentky & Righthand, 2003; Righthand et al., 2005; Seifert, 2005a; Worling, 2004)		
<b>Santa Barbara</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:	Yes:	Yes	No

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresse s both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static &amp; dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>	<b>Qualificatio ns/Prerequi sites</b>
<b>Assets and Risks Assessment (SB ARA)</b>		(personal communication Shane Jimerson, 28 <sup>th</sup> December , 2005)		Inter-rater reliability  Internal consistency  (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004)	Construct validity (as indicated by the fact that items are correlated with recidivism)  Convergent validity Predictive validity  (Jimerson, Sharkey, O'Brien et al., 2004)		
<b>Secure Care Psychosocial Screening (SECAPS)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Test-retest  Internal consistency	Yes:  Predictive validity  Concurrent	Yes	No

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static & dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending	Qualifications/Prerequisites
				(Putninš, 2004)	validity (Putninš, 2004; Putnins, 2005)		
<b>Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency (Bartel, Forth & Borum, 2004)  Inter-rater reliability (Catchpole & Gretton, 2003)	Yes:  Concurrent validity: (Catchpole & Gretton, 2003) (Catchpole & Gretton)  Criterion validity: (Bartel, Borum & Forth, 2002; Fitch, 2002; Gretton & Catchpole,	Yes	Violent Offenders

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static & dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending	Qualifications/Prerequisites
					<p>in press; Lodewijks, 2002; McEachran, 2001), (McEachran, 2001; Gretton &amp; Abramowitz, 2002)</p> <p>Predictive validity (Catchpole &amp; Gretton, 2003) Gretton &amp; Abramowitz, 2002)</p>		
<b>Victorian Offending Needs Indicator for Youth (VONIY)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes  Preliminary evidence for internal consistency	Yes:  Construct validity (Casey & Day, 2004)	Yes	No

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresse s both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static &amp; dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>	<b>Qualificatio ns/Prerequi sites</b>
<b>(Youth Offending component)</b>				(Casey & Day, 2004)	(Greville, 2002)		
<b>Washington State Juvenile Court Risk Assessment</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No evidence available	Yes: Predictive validity  Construct validity  (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004)	Yes	No
<b>YLS/CMI-AA (Australian Adaptation)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency (Thompson & Pope, in press; Thompson	Yes:  Predictive validity (Thompson & Pope, in press; Upperton	Yes	No

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresse s both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static &amp; dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>	<b>Qualificatio ns/Prerequi sites</b>
				& Putninš, 2003)  Test-rest stability (Thompson & Pope, in press; Thompson & Putninš, 2003)  Item-total correlations (Thompson & Pope, in press)	& Thompson)  Construct Validity (Thompson & Pope, in press)		
<b>Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI)</b>	Yes	Yes  (Orbis Partners, 2005b)	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency  (personal communication, David	Predictive validity not reported in a format that allows comparisons (statistical significance	Yes	No

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresse s both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static &amp; dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>	<b>Qualificatio ns/Prerequi sites</b>
				Robinson, 6 <sup>th</sup> December, 2005)	not indicated)  (personal communication, David Robinson, 6 <sup>th</sup> December, 2005)		
<b>Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes:  Internal consistency (Hoge, 2005; Jung & Rawana, 1999; Schmidt et al., 2005)  Inter-rater reliability (Catchpole & Gretton,	Yes:  Predictive validity (Catchpole & Gretton, 2003; Flores et al., 2003; Jung & Rawana, 1999; Marczyk et al., 2003; Schmidt et al., 2005)	Yes	No

Tool	Used To Assess Risk or Needs	Addresses both Risk and Needs	Includes both static & dynamic factors	Evidence for Reliability	Evidence for Validity	Designed to Target Re-offending	Qualifications/Prerequisites
				2003; Hoge, 2005; Marczyk et al., 2003; Schmidt et al., 2005)  Item-total correlations (Jung & Rawana, 1999)  Alpha reliability analysis revealed removal of some questions would increase alpha for many of component	Convergent validity (Catchpole & Gretton, 2003; Schmidt et al., 2005; Wilson & Rolleston, 2004) Jack, 2000 in (Catchpole & Gretton, 2003)  Concurrent validity (Catchpole & Gretton, 2003; Hoge, 2005)  Construct validity		

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Used To Assess Risk or Needs</b>	<b>Addresses both Risk and Needs</b>	<b>Includes both static &amp; dynamic factors</b>	<b>Evidence for Reliability</b>	<b>Evidence for Validity</b>	<b>Designed to Target Re-offending</b>	<b>Qualifications/Prerequisites</b>
				s (Flores et al., 2003)	(Hoge, 2005)		

<sup>a</sup> Indicates that there were important methodological problems in the associated research.