Impact and Need Analysis for a Gender Responsive Risk Assessment in Hawaii

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ICIS is currently studying the impact of introducing to the State of Hawaii a *Gender Responsive Risk Assessment*, designed by Patricia Van Voorhis, Ph.D. A collaborative four-year research project with the National Institute of Corrections, the University of Cincinnati, and Maui CARE (Creating a Responsive Environment for Women and Families) revealed that female offenders can benefit from gender specific treatment services. This is largely due to the high needs areas of the female offender population, which include symptoms of depression/anxiety, housing safety, anger, and family conflict.

The ICIS Working Group requested additional research to help answer the following questions: (1) is there a need for a gender specific responsive assessment tool; and (2) if so, can correctional agencies implement a gender responsive assessment without substantial impact on the probation/parole officers' workload?

A recidivism analysis was recently conducted to partially assist the ICIS Working Group with their impact study. The research findings reveal that for female offenders, the LSI-R and ASUS sub-domains are not predictive of recidivism, except for the LSI-R's Leisure and Recreation sub-domain. On the other hand, recidivism is predictive for male offenders on seven of ten LSI-R sub-domains. Thus, the LSI-R, with respect to the sub-domain risk parameters, appears to lack predictive value for female offenders in Hawaii. Additionally, data depicted in Table 1 reveal problems with risk classification for the female offender. The present LSI-R risk classification system adopted by ICIS is not predictive of recidivism for female offenders, although it is predictive for male offenders (statistically significant at the $p<.001$ level). Although female offenders experienced higher re-arrest rates as risk level increases - Administrative (45.7%), Medium (62.5%), and High (64.3%), however, it could not be statistically confirmed for predictive validity. The findings indicate that the use of the LSI-R for risk classification purposes may not be appropriate for female offenders.

Table 1: LSI-R Risk Classification				
	Female (n=166)		**Male (n=1,279)**	
	Pct. No Re-Arrest	**Pct. Re-Arrest**	**Pct. No Re-Arrest**	**Pct. Re-Arrest**
Administrative (<=18)	54.3%	45.7%	58.4%	41.6%
Low (19 - 20)	54.5%	45.5%	50.5%	49.5%
Medium (21 - 25)	37.5%	62.5%	46.0%	54.0%
High (26 - 35)	35.7%	64.3%	37.6%	62.4%
Surveillance (36+)	23.1%	76.9%	42.2%	57.8%
Total	41.4%	58.6%	46.3%	53.7%

Note: Female Recidivism by risk categories are not statistically significant

Male Recidivism by risk categories are statistically significant ($p<.001$)

An alternative risk classification system for female offenders may be needed to ensure that case planning, supervision levels, and treatment services are accurately targeted to the offender's risk level. A validated female offender risk classification system was introduced to the ICIS Policy Committee on April 18, 2008. This seven-item LSI-R and ASUS PROXY revealed high predictive recidivism validity for female offenders. It included the following indicators: (1) LSI-R total score (>=21); (2) LSI-R protective score (<=16); (3) Age range (30-44 years); (4) LSI-R Leisure/Recreation (>.50); (5) ASUS Involvement (>.50); (6) Age of first arrest (<22 years); and (7) Unemployment (>1 month). Table 2 reveals re-arrest rates for

females classified at the Administrative (25.0%), Low (40.6%), Medium (54.4%), and High (83.9%) risk levels. These rates are statistically predictive of recidivism at the p<.01 level of significance.

Table 2: Female LSI-R and ASUS PROXY	
Risk Classification (n=141)	Pct. Re-Arrest
Administrative (0 -1 pts)	25.0%
Low (2 - 3 pts)	40.6%
Medium (4 - 5 pts)	54.4%
High (6 pts)	83.9%
Surveillance (7 pts)	84.6%

Note: Female risk class recidivism is statistically predictive (p<.01)

In conclusion, this preliminary research suggests that a gender responsive assessment tool may be needed, considering that the LSI-R sub-domains have failed to show sufficient predictive validity for all but for one sub-domain. Furthermore, the lack of predictive validity in the current risk classification system for female offenders may necessitate an alternative classification system that is more accurately predictive of female recidivism. The alternate classification system can reduce workload issues by administering the Gender Responsive Risk Assessment to only the High/Surveillance level female offenders.