Validation Study of the
Domestic Violence Screening Instrument (DVSI)
All Assessments Completed Between August 2003 and July 2007

This report contains analyses of the Domestic Violence Screening Instrument (DVSI), which is used by the State of Hawaii to determine supervision levels for adult domestic violence (DV) offenders. The DVSI contains 12 questions that are designed to elicit information that is pertinent to determining an offender's supervision level, including: (1) criminal history; (2) past DV, alcohol, or substance abuse treatment; (3) past DV restraining/protective orders, including violations; (3) previous non-compliance with community supervision; and (4) various other static and dynamic factors.

With the exception of the recidivism data contained in Figures 16 and 17, the analyses featured in this report are based on all DVSI assessments completed between August 2003 and July 2007. The figures and tables included in this report have been organized in the following sub-sections:

1. A demographic profile of offenders assessed using the DVSI, including gender, age group, ethnicity, marital status, and employment.

2. Descriptive statistical analyses of the DVSI, including frequency distributions and crosstabulations of selected DVSI data elements.

3. A frequency distribution of DVSI scores.

4. Normalization of the DVSI, including DV and general recidivism figures crosstabulated with DVSI risk classification levels.

The DVSI analyses indicate that the instrument is accurately classifying offenders based on risk. The examination of general recidivism figures, by DVSI risk level, depicts a continuous trend of increasing recidivism rates as the risk level increases. A similar trend is also seen for domestic violence recidivism rates between the Low and Surveillance risk levels. These results indicate that the current classification of offenders is working at identifying those offenders who are at the greatest risk to recidivate.

METHODOLOGY

Overview: The State of Hawaii's Adult Client Services Branch began administering DVSI assessments on domestic violence offenders in August 2003. Unlike the LSI-R, which provides a risk classification level but requires a Proxy score of five or greater to be administered, DVSIs are administered to all DV offenders without any prerequisite. Furthermore, the DVSI assessment should theoretically provide a more appropriate risk classification level for DV offenders as compared to the LSI-R assessment, which is administered on offenders regardless of offense type.

With the exception of the demographic data contained in Figures 4 and 5, and the recidivism data featured in Figures 16 and 17, all data contained in this report were drawn exclusively from completed DVSI assessments. Data for Figures 4 and 5 were based on a smaller group of offenders who received both a DVSI and LSI-R assessment. After excluding assessments that were missing important information (such as SID numbers and assessment dates), the completed database totaled 1,913 assessments (through July 2007).

Validation Study: As part of the validation of the DVSI, this report contains recidivism data for offenders who were assessed using the DVSI. Recidivism data was reported by risk classification level to gauge the DVSI's ability to accurately classify offenders based on risk. Because recidivism was measured for the three-year period after the date of assessment, only those offenders who received an assessment prior to April 6, 2004, were included in the study, resulting in a sample of 442 offenders. Assessment data for these 442 offenders were then merged with Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) data. The CJIS data used in this report contained criminal history and arrest information (i.e., the victim's relationship to the offender) for each offender in the sample.

For the purpose of this study, recidivism was defined as any re-arrest within three years after the date that the DVSI was administered. Two types of recidivism were measured, domestic violence and general. Domestic violence recidivism included any arrest for the following crimes: (1) Abuse of a Family or Household Member; (2) Harassment; (3) Violation of a Temporary Restraining Order; (4) Violation of a Protective Order; (5) Terroristic Threatening; (6) Kidnapping; and (7) Endangering the Welfare of a Minor. General recidivism encompassed all crimes, including those previously stated under DV recidivism.

The methodology used to identify the seven previously stated offenses as being DV-related is based on certain assumptions. With the exception of Abuse of a Family or Household Member, any of these offenses could involve a suspect and victim who are not in an intimate partner or familial relationship. CJIS data can identify specific arrests as being DV-related by providing information about the victim's relationship to the offender. Additionally, there is a greater chance that an arrest is DV-related if it is adjudicated in Family Court, which can be identified using CJIS data. However neither of these means of verification are full proof, with victim information being listed in less than 10% of arrests and some DV cases (especially felonies) being adjudicated in Circuit Court. Therefore, while these offenses may not always be DV-related, they are typically the most indicative of domestic violence.

I. Demographic Profile

**Figure 1: Offender Gender,
All Assessments Completed Through July 2007**

n=1,913
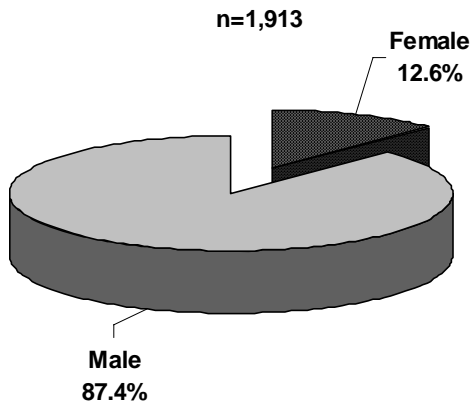

**Female
12.6%**

**Male
87.4%**

Figure 1 shows that since DVSI assessments were first collected in August 2003, probation officers have completed 1,917 assessments. Of those offenders assessed, 87.4% were *Male* and 12.6% were *Female*.

**Figure 2: Offender Age Groups,
All Assessments Completed Through July 2007**

n=1,913

**50-59 years
9.3%**

**60+ years
2.2%**

**18-29 years
26.2%**

**40-49 years
28.0%**

**30-39 years
34.3%**

Average Age= 37.8 years
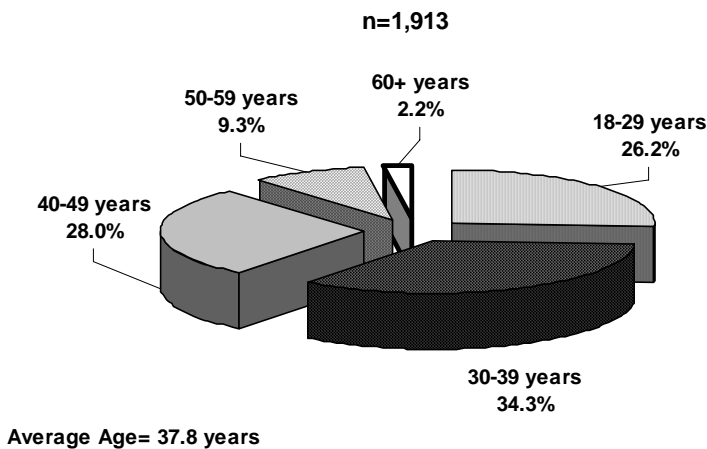
Figure 2 shows that the *30-39 years* age group accounted for the largest percentage (34.3%) of DVSI assessments, followed by the 40-*49 years* (27.9%) and *18-29 years* (26.3%) age groups. The average age of offenders who completed a DVSI assessment was 37.8 years.

**Figure 3: Offender Ethnicity,
All Assessments Completed Through July 2007**

n=1,913

**All Others
31.3%**

**Samoan
5.5%**

**Hawn/pt-
Hawn
29.5%**

**Caucasian
17.8%**

**Filipino
15.8%**

Figure 3 shows that *Hawaiian/part-Hawaiian* offenders accounted for the largest percentage (29.5%) of DVSI assessments among any single ethnicity, followed by *Caucasian* (17.8%) and *Filipino (15.9%)* offenders.

**Figure 4: Offender Marital Status,
All Assessments Completed Through July 2007
n=500**

Widowed
0.8%

Divorced
13.2%

Separated
7.4%

Single
50.4%

Married
28.2%

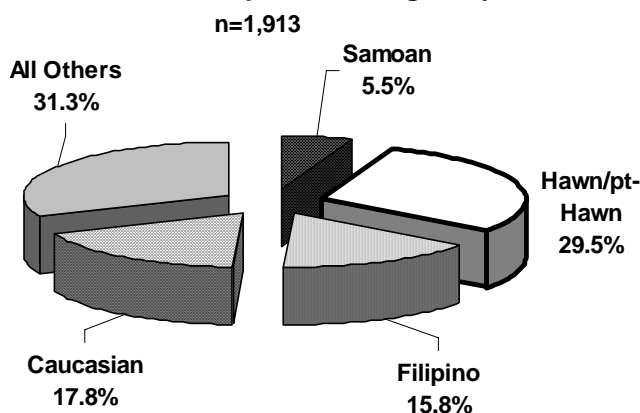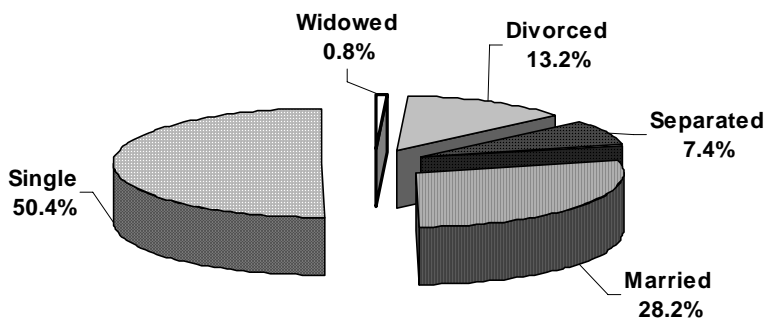**Figure 4** shows that *Single* of-fenders accounted for the largest percentage and slight majority (50.5%) of DVSI assessments, followed by *Married* (28.1%) and *Divorced* (13.2%) offenders.

Note: Sample size is limited to offenders who completed both a DVSI and an LSI-R as-sessment.

**Figure 5: Offender Employment,
All Assessments Completed Through July 2007
n=455**

Unemployed
51.4%
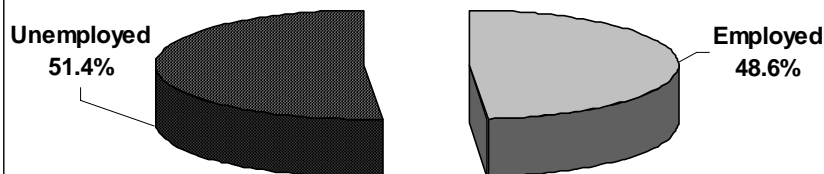
Employed
48.6%

Figure 5 shows that 51.3% of of-fenders were *Unemployed*, as compared to 48.7% who were *Employed*.

Note: Sample size is limited to offenders who completed both a DVSI and an LSI-R as-sessment.

II. Descriptive Statistics

**Figure 6: Initial Offense Type,
All Assessments Completed Through July 2007
n=1,913**

Offense	Percentage
Other	1.8%
Terr Threat	3.0%
Crim Contmp Crt	4.5%
Harassment	17.3%
TRO/Prt-Ord	18.6%
Assault	23.1%
Abuse Family	31.8%

Other: n=34
Terr Threat: n=58
Crim Contmp Crt: n=86
Harassment: n=330
TRO/Prt-Odr: n=356
Assault: n=441
Abuse Family: n=608

0.0%   10.0%   20.0%   30.0%   40.0%   50.0%

Figure 6 indicates that *Abuse of a Family or Household Member* was the most common (31.8%) initial offense type among offenders who received a DVSI assessment, followed by *Assault* (23.1%) and *Violation of a Temporary Restrain-ing Order or Protective Order* (18.6%).

**Figure 7: Was a SARA Recommended?,
All Assessments Completed Through July 2007**

n=1,913

No Response
40.0%

Yes
20.9%

No
39.1%
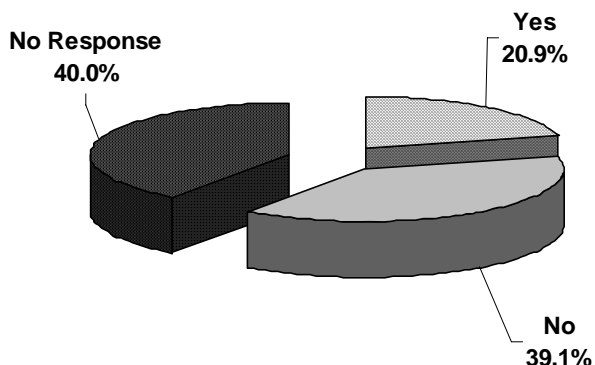
Figure 7 shows that of the 1,917 DVSI assessments completed, 40.0% of the responses to this question were blank. Probation Officers recommended the completion of a SARA for 400 (20.9%) of the cases.

**Figure 8: Average DVSI Scores, by Initial Offense Type,
All Assessments Completed Through July 2007**

n=1,913

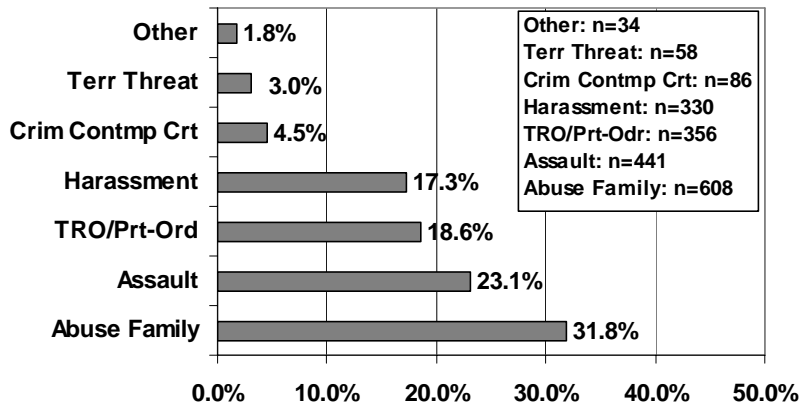|	
TRO/Prt-Odr	11.56
Crim Contmp Crt	7.90
Terr Threat	6.74
Abuse Family	5.93
Other	5.79
Assault	3.37
Harassment	3.28
Average Score	6.04

p<.001

0.00   5.00   10.00   15.00
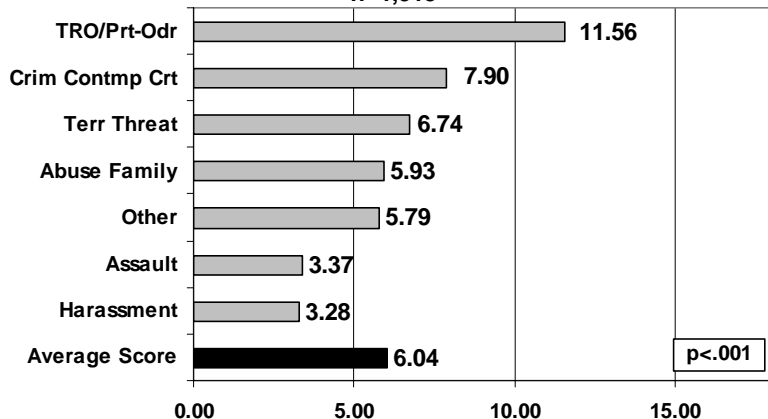
Figure 8 shows average DVSI scores by initial offense type. Offenders arrested for *Violating a Temporary Restraining Order or Protective Order* received the highest average DVSI score (11.56). Offenders arrested for *Harassment* received the lowest average DVSI score (3.27). The statewide average DVSI score was 6.03.

**Figure 9: DVSI Risk Classification Levels,
All Assessments Completed Through July 2007**

n=1,913

Surveillance (18+)	2.5%
High (9-17)	23.5%
Medium (7-8)	12.0%
Low (6)	6.3%
Administrative (0-5)	55.7%

0.0% 20.0% 40.0% 60.0% 80.0% 100.0%

Figure 9 shows that the majority (55.8%) of offenders were classified in the DVSI *Administrative* risk level, followed by the *High* (23.4%) and *Medium* risk (12.0%) levels.

**Figure 10: DVSI- Percentage of Risk Factors Present,
All Assessments Completed Through July 2007**

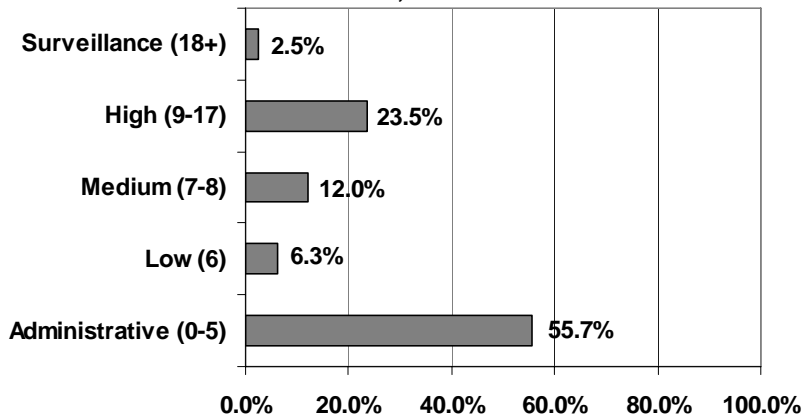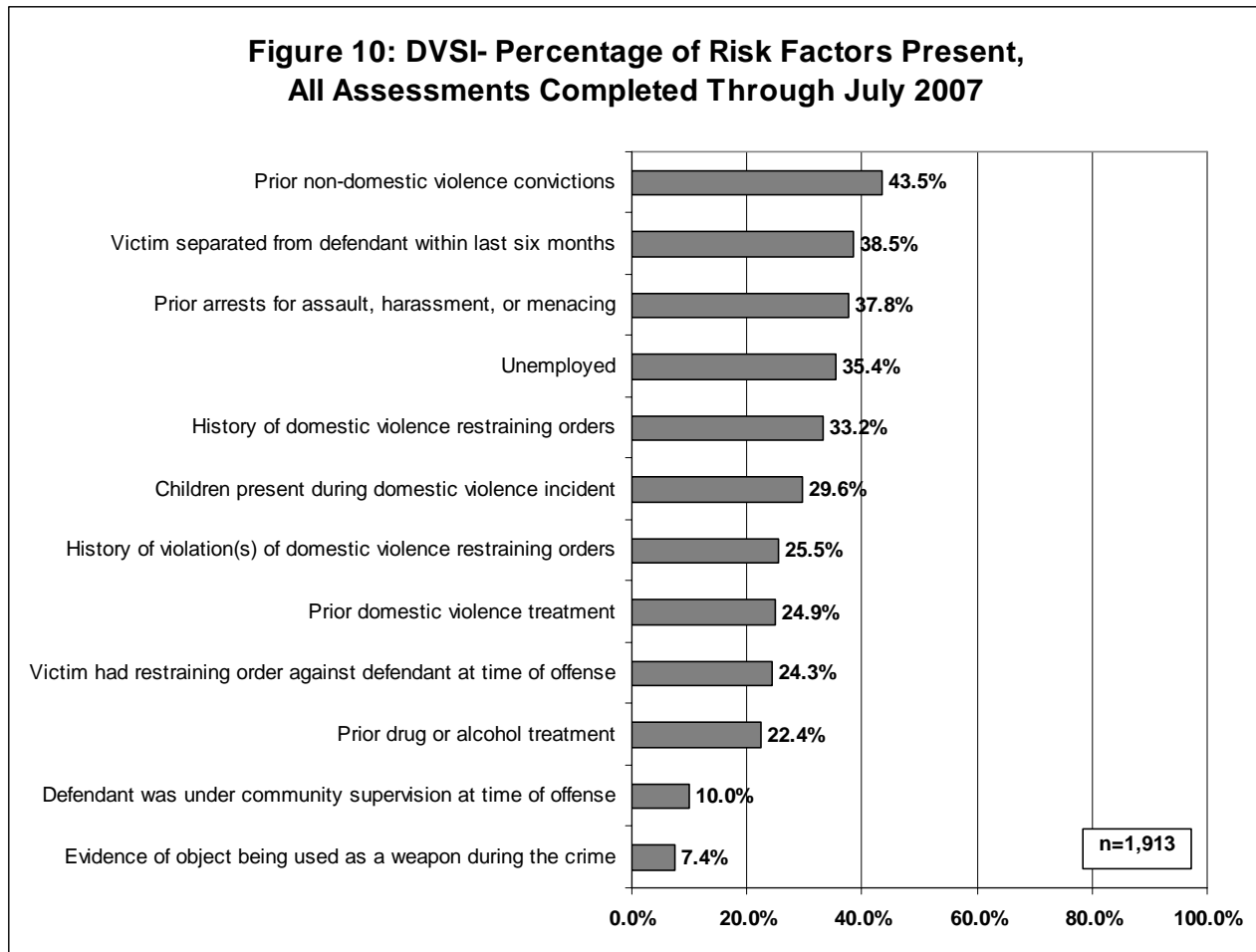| Risk Factor	Percentage
Prior non-domestic violence convictions	43.5%
Victim separated from defendant within last six months	38.5%
Prior arrests for assault, harassment, or menacing	37.8%
Unemployed	35.4%
History of domestic violence restraining orders	33.2%
Children present during domestic violence incident	29.6%
History of violation(s) of domestic violence restraining orders	25.5%
Prior domestic violence treatment	24.9%
Victim had restraining order against defendant at time of offense	24.3%
Prior drug or alcohol treatment	22.4%
Defendant was under community supervision at time of offense	10.0%
Evidence of object being used as a weapon during the crime	7.4%

n=1,913

Figure 10 displays the percentage of risk factors present by the 12 questions that comprise the DVSI. *Prior non-domestic violence convictions* (43.4%) represents the most commonly reported risk factor. Three other risk factors were each reported in more than one-third of the assessments; *Victim separated from defendant within the last six months* (38.5%); *Prior arrests for assault, harassment, or menacing* (37.7%); and *Unemployed* (35.3%).

Evidence of an object being used as a weapon during the commission of the crime (7.4%) represents the least commonly reported DVSI item. Four other risk items were each reported in less than one-fourth of the assessments; *Defendant was under community supervision at the time of offense* (10.0%); *Prior drug or alcohol treatment* (22.4%); *Victim had a restraining order against the defendant at the time of offense* (24.3%); and *Prior Domestic Violence treatment* (24.9%).
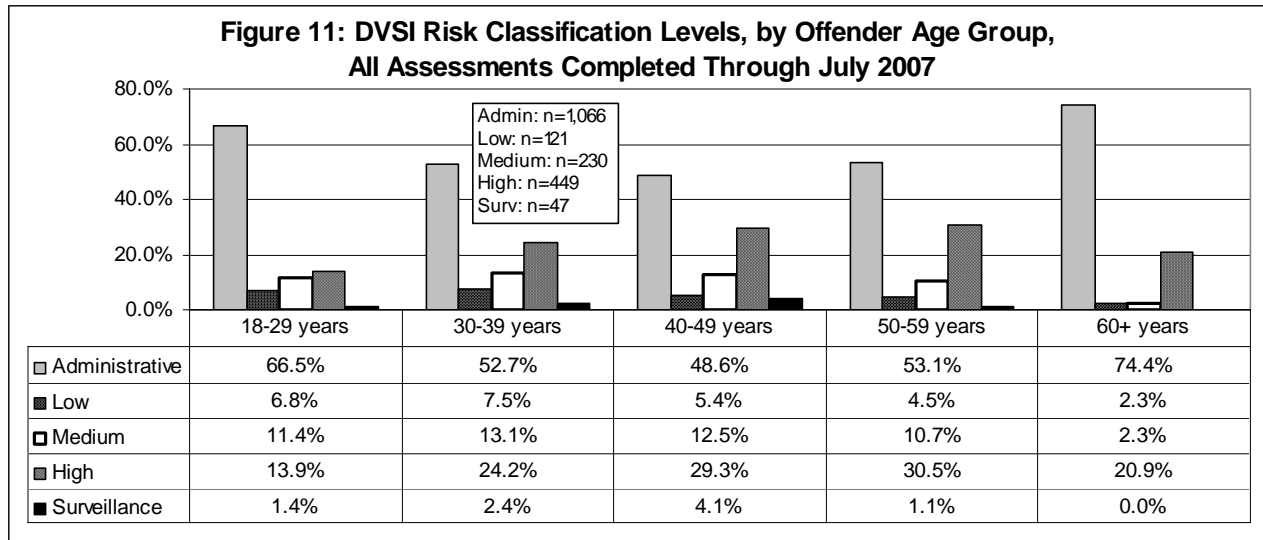
Figure 11: DVSI Risk Classification Levels, by Offender Age Group, All Assessments Completed Through July 2007

Admin: n=1,066
Low: n=121
Medium: n=230
High: n=449
Surv: n=47

	18-29 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years	60+ years
Administrative	66.5%	52.7%	48.6%	53.1%	74.4%
Low	6.8%	7.5%	5.4%	4.5%	2.3%
Medium	11.4%	13.1%	12.5%	10.7%	2.3%
High	13.9%	24.2%	29.3%	30.5%	20.9%
Surveillance	1.4%	2.4%	4.1%	1.1%	0.0%

Figure 11 depicts differences in DVSI risk classification levels by offender age group. Offenders in the oldest age group (*60+ years*) had the largest proportion (74.4%) of *Administrative* risk classifications, followed by the *18-29 years* age group (66.5%). Offenders in the *40-49 years* age group accounted for the largest cumulative percentage (33.4%) of *High* and *Surveillance* risk classifications, followed by offenders in the *50-59 years* age group (31.6%).

Figure 12: DVSI Risk Classification, by Offender Ethnicity, All Assessments Completed Through July 2007

Admin: n=1,066
Low: n=121
Medium: n=230
High: n=449
Surv: n=47

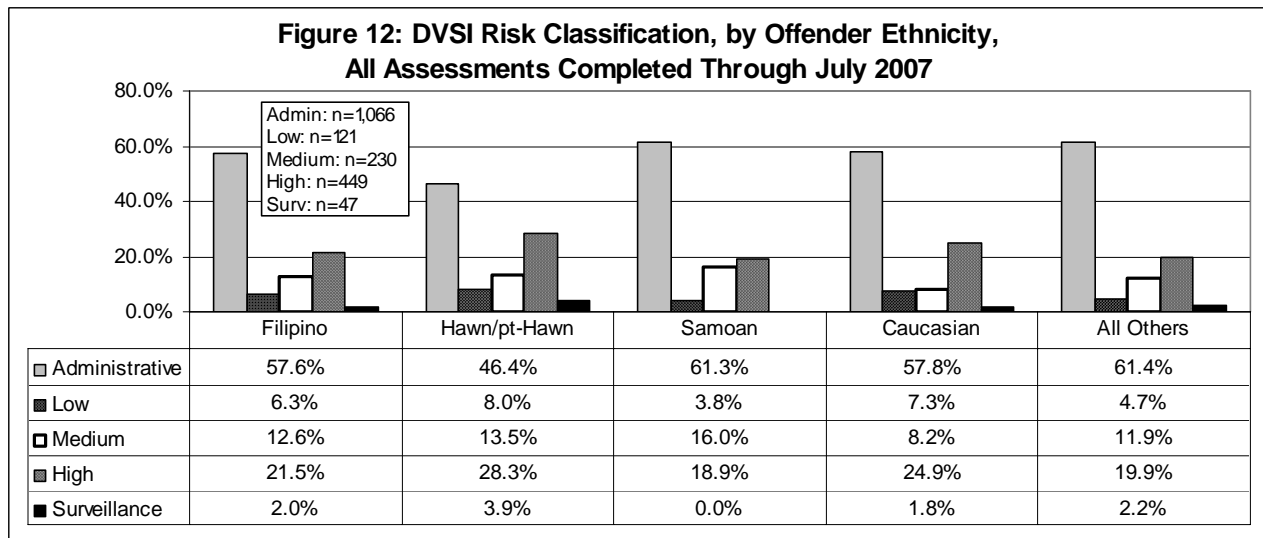|	Filipino	Hawn/pt-Hawn	Samoan	Caucasian	All Others
Administrative	57.6%	46.4%	61.3%	57.8%	61.4%
Low	6.3%	8.0%	3.8%	7.3%	4.7%
Medium	12.6%	13.5%	16.0%	8.2%	11.9%
High	21.5%	28.3%	18.9%	24.9%	19.9%
Surveillance	2.0%	3.9%	0.0%	1.8%	2.2%

Figure 12 shows DVSI risk classification levels by offender ethnicity. Offenders in the *All Others* category accounted for the largest cumulative percentage (66.1%) of *Administrative* and *Low* risk classifications, followed by *Caucasian* offenders (65.1%). *Hawaiian/part-Hawaiian* offenders had the largest proportions of *High* (28.3%) and *Surveillance* (3.9%) risk classifications.
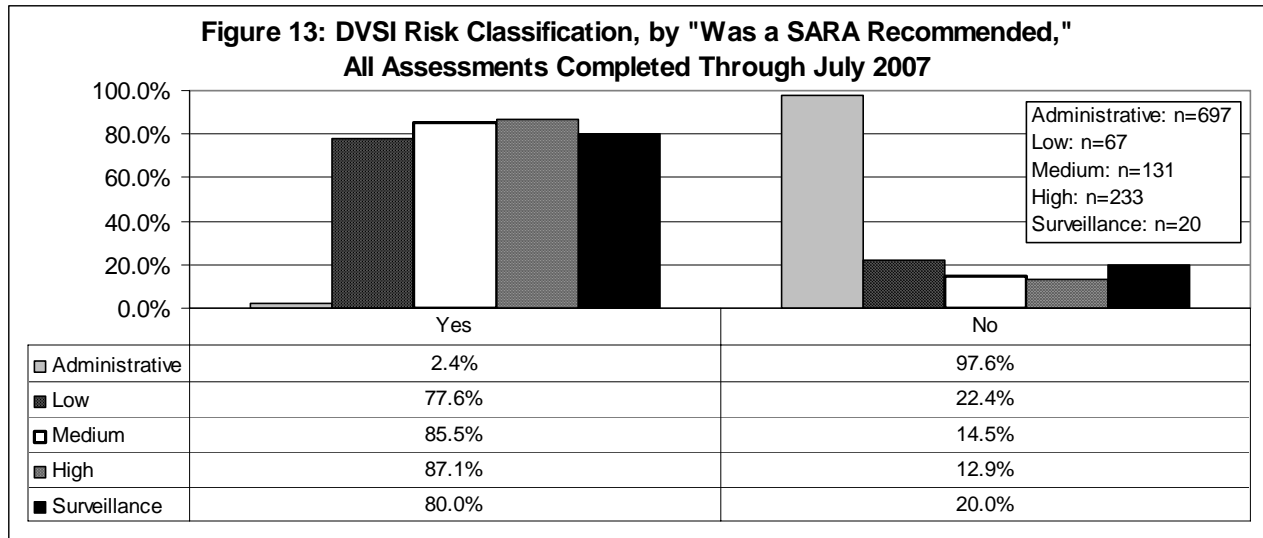
**Figure 13: DVSI Risk Classification, by "Was a SARA Recommended,"
All Assessments Completed Through July 2007**

Administrative: n=697
Low: n=67
Medium: n=131
High: n=233
Surveillance: n=20

	Yes	No
☐ Administrative	2.4%	97.6%
■ Low	77.6%	22.4%
☐ Medium	85.5%	14.5%
▨ High	87.1%	12.9%
■ Surveillance	80.0%	20.0%

Figure 13 depicts DVSI risk classification levels by responses to the question "Was a SARA recommended?" The percentage of affirmative responses increased from 2.4% at the *Administrative* risk level to 77.6% at the *Low* risk level. The *High* risk level accounted for the largest percentage (87.1%) of affirmative responses, followed by the *Medium* risk level (85.5%).

Based on a previously established DVSI policy, probation officers are required to conduct a SARA assessment if an offender scores 7 or higher on the DVSI. A DVSI score of 7 corresponds with the low-end cut-off score for the *Medium* risk level. Based on this policy, all offenders in the *Medium*, *High*, and *Surveillance* risk levels should have been recommended for a SARA assessment.
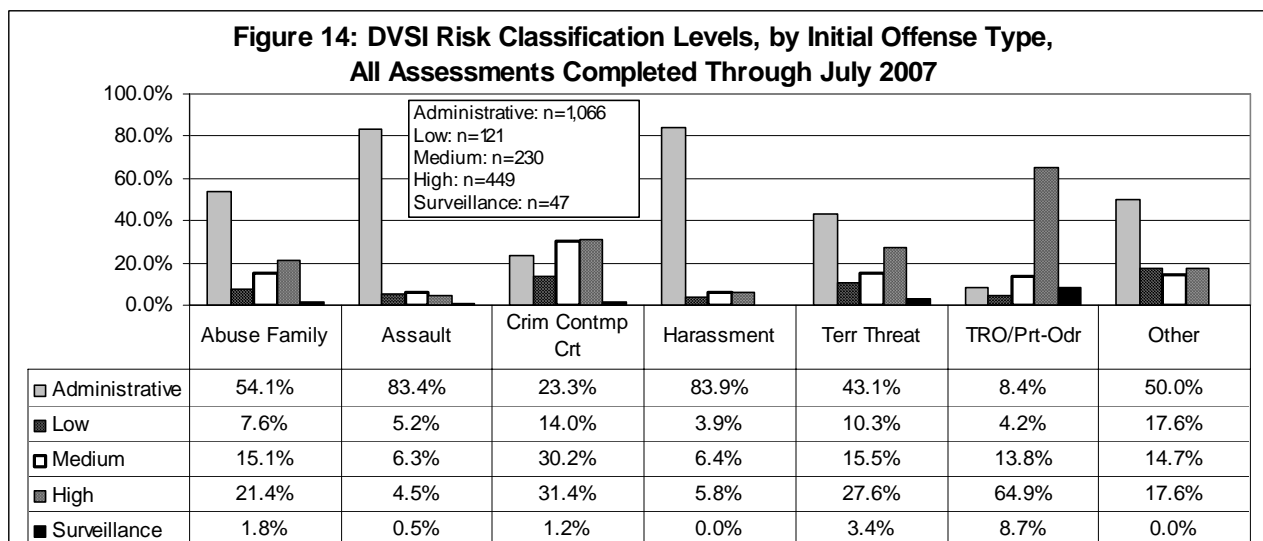
**Figure 14: DVSI Risk Classification Levels, by Initial Offense Type,
All Assessments Completed Through July 2007**

Administrative: n=1,066
Low: n=121
Medium: n=230
High: n=449
Surveillance: n=47

	Abuse Family	Assault	Crim Contmp Crt	Harassment	Terr Threat	TRO/Prt-Odr	Other
☐ Administrative	54.1%	83.4%	23.3%	83.9%	43.1%	8.4%	50.0%
■ Low	7.6%	5.2%	14.0%	3.9%	10.3%	4.2%	17.6%
☐ Medium	15.1%	6.3%	30.2%	6.4%	15.5%	13.8%	14.7%
▨ High	21.4%	4.5%	31.4%	5.8%	27.6%	64.9%	17.6%
■ Surveillance	1.8%	0.5%	1.2%	0.0%	3.4%	8.7%	0.0%

Figure 14 shows DVSI risk classification levels by initial offense type. Offenders arrested for *Harassment* had the largest proportion of *Administrative* risk classifications (83.9%), followed by offenders arrested for *Assault* (83.4%). Offenders arrested for *Violating a Temporary Restraining Order or Protective Order* accounted for the largest percentage of *High* (64.9%) and *Surveillance* (8.7%) risk classifications.

III. Frequency Distribution

Table 1: DVSI Total Score - Frequency Distribution

DVSI Score	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	187	9.8	9.8
1	71	3.7	13.5
2	264	13.8	27.3
3	156	8.2	35.4
4	223	11.7	47.1
5	165	8.6	55.7
6	121	6.3	62.0
7	100	5.2	67.3
8	130	6.8	74.1
9	83	4.3	78.4
10	78	4.1	82.5
11	59	3.1	85.6
12	64	3.3	88.9
13	41	2.1	91.1
14	34	1.8	92.8
15	37	1.9	94.8
16	30	1.6	96.3
17	23	1.2	97.5
18	20	1.0	98.6
19	11	0.6	99.2
20	6	0.3	99.5
21	2	0.1	99.6
22	1	0.1	99.6
23	3	0.2	99.8
24	2	0.1	99.9
25	1	0.1	99.9
26	1	0.1	100.0
Total	1,913	100.0	

Figure 15: DVSI Distribution Curve

Mean = 6.04
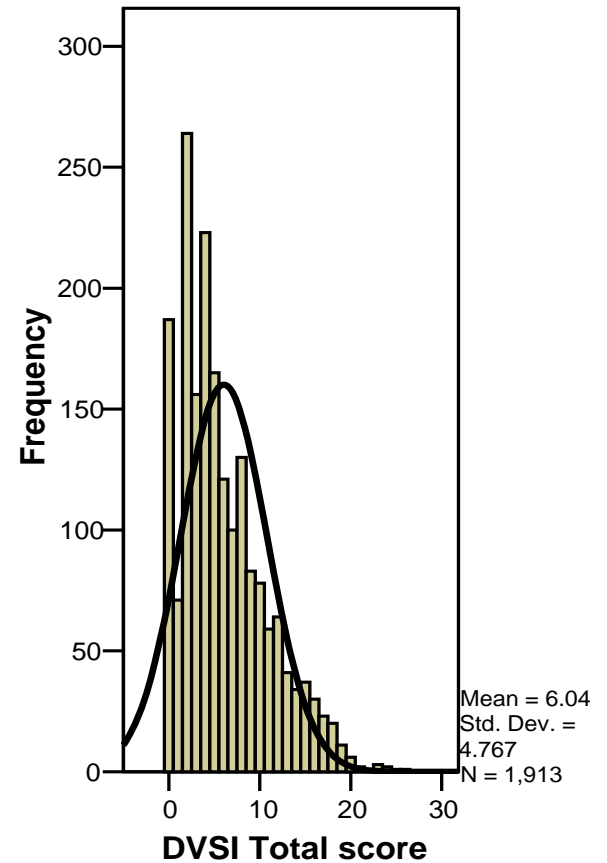Std. Dev. = 4.767
N = 1,913

Figure 15 depicts the frequency distribution of DVSI scores for the 1,913 offenders included in this study. The average score was 6.04, with approximately 62% of the sample falling at or below the average score. **Table 1** shows that 187 (9.8%) offenders obtained the lowest score possible (0), while the highest score obtained was a 26. A DVSI score of 2 was the most frequently obtained score, occurring in 13.8% (264) assessments.

IV. Normalization of the DVSI

Figure 16: DVSI Risk Classifiation Levels, by DV Re-Arrest, All Assessments Completed Prior to April 6, 2004
n=442

Recidivism Rates
Administrative: 14.4%
Low: 12.5%
Medium: 20.3%
High: 28.0%
Surveillance: 55.6%
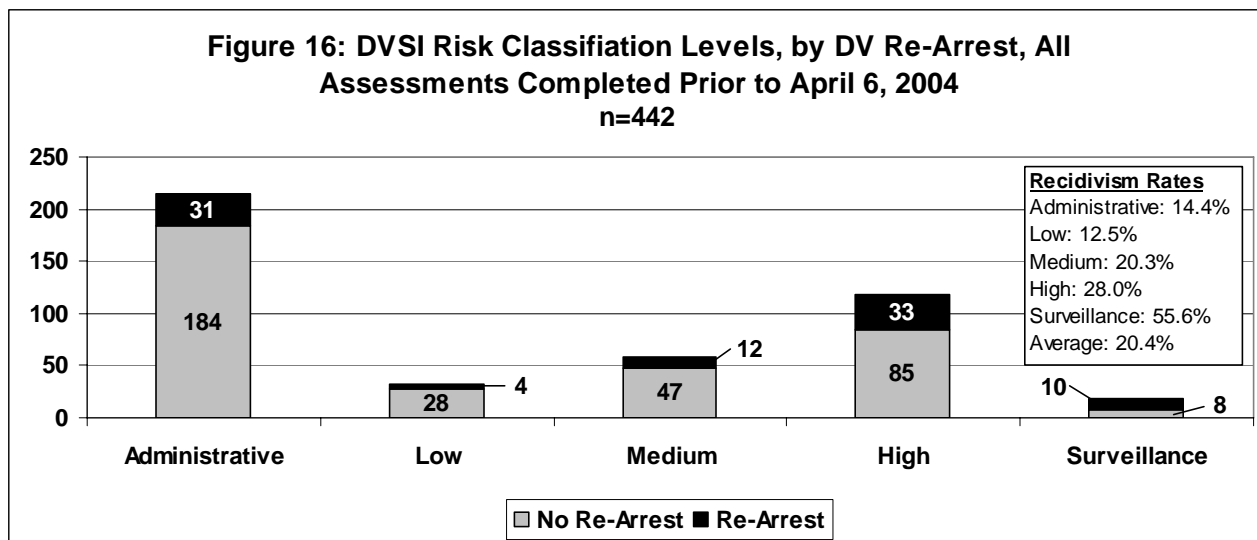Average: 20.4%

□ No Re-Arrest ■ Re-Arrest

Figure 16 depicts the number of offenders who had a DV re-arrest, by DVSI risk classification level. With the exception of the *Low* risk level, recidivism rates continue to increase as the intensity of the risk level increases. Recidivism rates increased from 12.5% at the *Low* risk level to 55.6% at the *Surveillance risk* level. The overall DV recidivism rate was 20.4%. Differences between DV recidivism rates by DVSI risk class were not statistically significant.
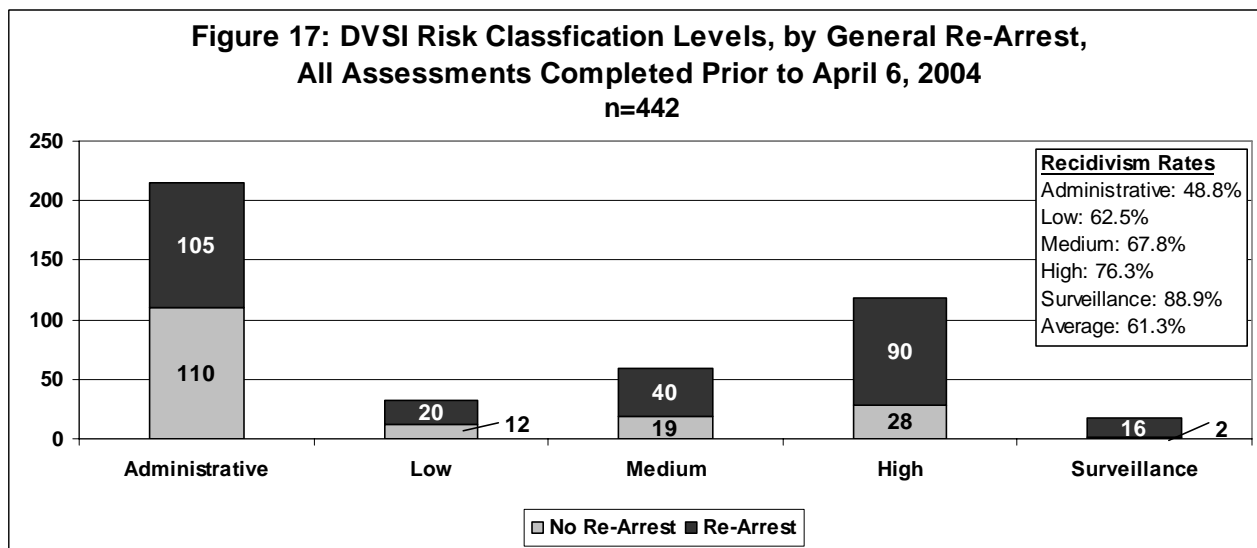

Figure 17: DVSI Risk Classfication Levels, by General Re-Arrest, All Assessments Completed Prior to April 6, 2004
n=442

Recidivism Rates
Administrative: 48.8%
Low: 62.5%
Medium: 67.8%
High: 76.3%
Surveillance: 88.9%
Average: 61.3%

□ No Re-Arrest ■ Re-Arrest

Figure 17 shows the number of offenders who had a general re-arrest (i.e., DV plus all other types), by DVSI risk classification level. There is a clear trend of recidivism rates increasing as the severity of the risk level increases. Recidivism rates increased from 48.8% at the *Administrative* risk level to 88.9% at the *Surveillance* risk level. Differences between general recidivism rates by DVSI risk class were found to be statistically significant at the $p<.001$ level.