Evaluating & improving California’s risk management of youth

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Nature of risk assessment

• Evaluations of people to (1) characterize the risk that they will commit violence or crime in the future, and (2) develop interventions to manage or reduce that risk

• How and why did a person act criminally and/or violently in the past, and what is the likelihood these or other factors might lead the person to do so again in the future?

• Risk status vs. risk state- must assess both to meet DJJ goals
Goals of risk assessment

• Fewer new crimes and new victims
• More specifically...
   – Aid in release decision-making
   – Inform supervision/intervention
     • Target changeable risk factors
     • Track improvement
• Goals of a structured approach
   – Improve consistency of decisions
   – Improve transparency of decisions
     • Accountability to victims, perpetrators, and society
     • Liability management

Andrews et al. (2006); Douglas & Skeem (2005); Hart (2005)
Risk assessment tools

• 1st generation
  – Unaided clinical judgment
  – Performs poorly

• 2nd generation
  – Actuarial tools- atheoretical, static
  – Example: California Static Risk Assessment (CSRA)

• 3rd generation
  – Structured judgment tools- theoretical/empirical, include dynamic
  – Example: SAVRY

• 4th generation
  – Service and supervision guides, from intake to case closure
  – Example: YASI (if validated)

• The truth? If they are well-validated, 2nd-4th generation tools predict equally well (Campbell, French, & Gendreau, 2009) Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith (2006)
Youth Assessment & Screening Instrument (YASI)

- Commercial tool by ORBIS Partners Inc.
  - Appx. 180 items scored by worker based on interview and record
  - Rooted in Washington data (WSIPP)
  - ORBIS did staff training & “customization” of scores for DJJ...no reliability or validity studies
- Why an independent assessment?
"Central eight" for criminal behavior
(Andrews, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>Need</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of criminal behavior</td>
<td>Build alternative behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antisocial personality pattern</td>
<td>Problem solving skills, anger management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antisocial cognition</td>
<td>Develop less risky thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antisocial peers</td>
<td>Reduce association with criminal others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family and/or marital discord</td>
<td>Reduce conflict, build positive relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor school and/or work performance</td>
<td>Enhance performance, rewards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Few leisure or recreation activities</td>
<td>Enhance outside involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substance abuse</td>
<td>Reduce use</td>
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Phase 1: Interrater reliability

- The YASI *cannot* be useful without interrater reliability (which is≈ unknown)

- Goals of Phase 1
  - Assess interrater reliability
  - Attempt to train DJJ staff to acceptable levels of interrater reliability
Phase 1 Method

• Develop 5 reliability cases (Norwalk; April)
• Visit each facility to administer 3 reliability cases to staff (one visit per site; May-Sept.)
• Assess agreement with criterion scores
• For those who fail to meet criterion, use 2 reliability cases via phone and email to attempt to reach reliability (Oct-Nov.)
• Staff who do not reach reliability will be excluded from phases 2 and 3
Phase 2: Concurrent validity

• Need to determine whether the YASI *really* assesses the dynamic risk factors it is supposed to... factors that will reduce risk, if targeted.

• Goals of Phase 2
  – Assess whether the YASI correlates with well validated measures of risk
  – Assess whether YASI scores change over four-month intervals
Phase 2 Method

- Establish a UCI data reception center to enter YASI scores from *reliable* staff (5/10)
  - Completed at baseline and every 120 d
- Visit UCI four facilities (in Ione, Stockton, & Norwalk) every other month for one year to assess 350 willing youth
  - Validated measures of risk factors ostensibly assessed by YASI
  - 2 hour assessment with incentive
- Analyze degree of change in YASI scores over time based on those with 2+ reassessments (through 1/12)
Phase 3: Predictive utility

• Does the YASI actually identify youth who will commit level 2-3 infractions in DJJ facilities?

• Does the YASI actually identify youth who will reoffend in the community?

• If so, how?
  – And at what cut scores?
Phase 3 Method

• Collect relevant electronic databases from DJJ on youths’ infractions and rearrest since their first YASI assessment (range= 1 day to 1.5 years followup)
• Merge data with YASI database from reliable examiners established for Phase 2
• Survival analysis of YASI’s performance
• Fit and cross validate risk categories
## Project Timeline

Progress reports/meetings due at end of each quarter, beginning July 1, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 1-Mar 30 (CEBC)</td>
<td>April 1-June 30 (CEBC)</td>
<td>July 1-Sept 30</td>
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<td>Recruit staff; IRB approval (2 mos)</td>
<td>Videotape training cases (1 mo)</td>
<td>Remedial reliability (2 mos)</td>
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<td>Establish baseline reliability (5 mos)</td>
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<td>Collect reliable CA-YASI initial and reassessments; enter at UCI data center (20 mos)</td>
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<td>Visit four facilities six times to assess convergent validity of recently administered CA-YASI for 350 youth (14 mos)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Collect infraction and recidivism databases (2 mos)</td>
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<td>Reliability analyses</td>
<td>Validity &amp; change analyses</td>
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<td>Predictive utility analyses</td>
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<td>Project 2 report</td>
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<td>Project 1 report</td>
<td>Final report</td>
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Risks, Needs, & Benefits

• Risks – confidentiality certificate
• Needs – facilitation and support (suggestions?)
• Benefits – directly improve & inform risk management; streamline system to maximize resources
Getting Started

- Staff recruitment & IRB approval
- Plan refinement with DJJ
- Phase I
  - Norwalk visit for video cases
  - All sites for reliability baseline