Automated Criminal Risk Score

Overview

The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) uses the Automated Criminal Risk Score (ACRS) to predict the likelihood an offender will recidivate. ACRS is a mathematical equation that uses static variables. The scores range from 0.0 to 1.0. Scores approximating zero identify offenders who are very unlikely to recidivate. Conversely, offenders with high scores are much more likely to re-offend. Those with high ACRS scores will be placed in programs that reduce their risk of committing future crime. Offenders with low scores will not be placed in programs. ACRS is coupled with the criminogenic assessment, to determine the proper programming for each offender.

In Oregon, recidivism is considered the reconviction of a new felony within three years of release. Presently, about 30% of offenders will be reconvicted of a new felony after release from prison or jail.

Risk factors of recidivism

ACRS uses seven risk factors: age, earned time, sentence length, revocation, number of prior incarcerations, prior theft convictions and type of crime (person, property or statutory). ACRS is different than many risk determining tools because it uses underlined combinations of the characteristics to better predict who is likely to recidivate. Most other risk tools consider offender characteristics separately and therefore get a less accurate conclusion.

Example

Age is an excellent predictor of subsequent criminal involvement. Most offenders tend to be young and impulsive. In addition to age, behavior while incarcerated and treatment involvement are also good predictors of subsequent criminal involvement. Offenders receiving treatment and who are not

disciplinary problems within the institutions are less likely to recidivate. Being young, a disciplinary problem, and not attending treatment all add to risk. Conversely, disciplinary issues for older inmates many not elevate risk as much.

Male vs. female offenders

ACRS is used to predict recidivism of both male and female offenders. However, there are different mathematical equations for male and female offenders. The difference between the equations is small. The factors and the relative influence of each factor on recidivism is similar for male and female offenders. If the factors and the relative influence of each factor is similar, why are there are so many more males incarcerated than females? ACRS does not answer this question. ACRS is not used to predict whether a person is likely to initially commit a crime and be convicted. ACRS is used only to predict recidivism. Once in prison, characteristics for recidivism are similar for males and females.

SB 267: evidence based practices

In 2003, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 267, requiring an increasing percentage of state money allocated to five state agencies to be "evidence-based" and cost effective. The DOC is one of those agencies and ACRS is an illustration of how the agency is moving toward evidence-based practices. ACRS identifies the inmates who truly need specialized treatment while incarcerated. ■

**The mission of the
Oregon Department of Corrections
is to promote public safety by
holding offenders accountable for their actions
and reducing the risk of future criminal
behavior.**

**Max Williams, Director
(503) 945-0920**

**Mitch Morrow, Deputy Director
(503) 945-0921**

**Colette S. Peters
Assistant Director Public Services
& Inspector General
(503) 945-9092**

**Oregon Department of Corrections
2575 Center Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301-4667**

www.oregon.gov/doc

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