



*Development of the RNR-Assessment  
(RNR-A):  
A new comprehensive risk, needs and  
responsivity assessment of all clients  
in the Swedish Prison and Probation  
Service*

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## *Background and purpose*

Documented problems with sentence planning, primarily due to insufficient use of structured assessments of criminal recidivism risk in Swedish Prison and Probation Service (SPPS)

→ Development of a Risk, Needs and Responsivity assessment format

- ✓ Foundation for better targeted client interventions
- ✓ To be used with all SPPS clients (approx. 20 000 yearly)
- ✓ Assess static and dynamic risk factors (needs) and responsivity in a simple yet structured way



# *Construction of the RNR-A*

## Pilot study in 2012-2013:

- ✓ Surveyed different models and tools to assess reoffending risk and evaluate criminogenic needs
- ✓ Reviewed recent research on risk factors for criminal recidivism risk and assessment instruments
- ✓ Development and evaluation of a prototype for risk, needs and responsivity assessment for all clients



## *Construction and feasibility testing*

RNR-A prototype tested by 36 prison and probation officers in the pilot study 2012-2013:

- ✓ Approx. 240 completed RNR-A, taking about 2 hours each to complete
- ✓ The RNR-A items generally exhibited high interrater reliability
- ✓ The clients found the format acceptable
- ✓ The RNR-A raised the quality of the sentence planning work

→ Concluded that RNR-A prototype, with minor adjustments, feasible to apply throughout the SPPS



## *Underlying theories*

- The RNR-A design is based on the principles of **Risk, Need and Responsivity** for effective work in reducing criminal recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2010)
- RNR-principles in short terms:
  - ✓ Relapse prevention treatment should be given to clients with medium risk to high risk of reoffending (Risk Principle)
  - ✓ Focus on changeable factors of the client that influence the risk to reoffend (Need Principle)
  - ✓ Modify the treatment to comply of the client's learning style and specific conditions (Responsivity principle)

# RNR-A structure

**Part A** collected from records of the National Police and SPPS files

1. History of antisocial behavior

**Part B** addressed with a client interview

2. Antisocial personality pattern

3. Antisocial attitudes / beliefs

4. Antisocial friends


5. Substance misuse

6. Family/relationships

7. Work/school / living conditions

8. Leisure/recreation

Somatic illness & Mental illness



Central eight  
risk factors  
(Andrews &  
Bonta, 2010)



## *RNR-A process*

1. Completion of file-based Part A + client interview based Part B
2. Computerized decision-aid sums up number and constellations of risks and needs factors according to existing literature
  - ✓ Suggests re-offending risk levels (low-medium-high) separately for general criminality/violence, intimate partner violence and sexual offending
  - ✓ Suggests need levels (low-medium-high)
  - ✓ Guides manual assessment of client responsivity to available treatments and interventions
  - ✓ The RNR-A result does not affect the type of penalty or the length of the sentence



**A1. How many times has the client previously been convicted?**

Free text, only whole numbers in numerical form

**A2. Has the client been convicted in Sweden during the last 5 years in freedom?**

0 = No, the client is not previous convicted or more than 5 years of freedom have passed since the last conviction  
1 = Yes, the client has been convicted, but only once, in the past 5 years in freedom  
2 = Yes, the client has been convicted on two or more occasions during the last 5 years of freedom

**A3. Has the client previously been convicted of violent crimes?**

0 = Nej  
1 = Yes, but only once convicted of a violent crime  
2 = Yes, convicted of violent crimes twice or more

**A4. At what age was the client first convicted?**

0 = Over the age of 20  
1 = 18-20 years old  
2 = Under the age of 18  
X = The client has not previously been convicted of crimes

*RNR-A  
item  
examples  
Part A: 15 file-  
based items  
regarding history  
of antisocial  
behavior*





## *RNR-A item examples*

*Part B: 72 interview-based items from remaining  
7 Central Eight risk factor domains including somatic  
and mental illness*

**B61. Does it sometimes happen that you need to use violence in order to take care of situations?**

0 = No

1 = Possibly/partially

2 = Yes

N = Do not know / will not answer

**B64. If someone has challenged you to a physical fight, have you sometimes been able to leave the place without getting into the fight?**

0 = Yes

1 = Possibly/partially

2 = No

N = Do not know / will not answer

# Distribution of items for assessment of *need* domains

Domain	History record	Interview	RNR-A in total
History of anitiosocial behavior (static)	15	3	18
Antisocial personality pattern		18	18
Antisocial attitudes / beliefs		16	16
Antisocial friends		5	5
Substance abuse	1	6 *	7 *
Family / relationships		4	4
Work / school		9	9
Leisure / recreation		3	3
Somatic illness		6	6
Mental illness		3	3
Total number of items	15	72	87

\* Includes summary of AUDIT / DUDIT



# Distribution of items for assessment of *risk*

Domain	General Risk & Violence Risk	Sexual Offence Risk	Intimate Partner Violence Risk	Total in RNR-A
History of anitisoal behavior (static)	18	4	6	18
Antisocial personality pattern	18			18
Antisocial attitudes / beliefs	9		6	16
Antisocial friends	5			5
Substance abuse	7 *		2 *	7 *
Family / relationships		1		4
Age	1	1		1
Current sentence		2		2
Number of items used for calculation	58	8	14	
* Includes summary of AUDIT / DUDIT				

# General & violence risk unweighted -> weighted

Domain		Unweighted		Weighted
History of anitissocial behavior (static)	18	31%	} →	33,3%
Age	1	2%		
Antisocial personality pattern	18	31%	→	16,7%
Antisocial attitudes / beliefs	9	16%	→	16,7%
Antisocial friends	5	9%	→	16,7%
Substance abuse	7	12%	→	16,7%
	58	100%	→	100,0%

# Computer generated risk scores

**Risk for reoffending in general criminality and violence (not sexual offence or intimate partner violence)**

Risk level:

Low	Medium	High
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**Risk for reoffending in sexual offence**

Risk level:

Low	Medium	High
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**Risk for reoffending in intimate partner**

Risk level:

Not coded
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**Use of the override:**

Yes
No

**Please specify your considerations:**

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# Computer generated scores of the client's need domains

## Domain

**History of antisocial behavior (static)**

**Antisocial personality pattern**

**Antisocial attitudes / beliefs**

**Antisocial friends**

**Substance abuse**

**Family / relationships**

**Work / school**

**Leisure / recreation**

**Somatic illness**

**Mental illness**

## Need level

Low	Medium	High
Low	Medium	High
Low	Medium	High
Low	Medium	High
Low	Medium	High
Low	Medium	High
Low	Medium	High
Low	Medium	High

Low	Medium	High
Low	Medium	High

# Evaluation areas

- Predictive validity
- System based vs. professionally categorized risk
- Cut-off risk levels
- Developing items – excluding / including
- Subgroups such as females, youths

Sentences to follow up  
 Probation  
 Short prison sentences  
 Long prison sentences

	2014			2015			2016			2017			2018		
Sentences to follow up															
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# Thanks for your attention!

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