

SARA™

Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide



Assessment of the likelihood of domestic violence

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Males 18 and older

Professional-completed, 20 items

60-90 minute administration time

B-Level User Qualification

Paper-and-pencil (handscored) © 1999 by MHS Inc.



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Aim

The Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide (SARA) can help determine the degree to which an individual poses a domestic violence threat to his/her spouse, children, another family member, or another person involved. The tool is a quality-control checklist that both determines the extent to which the assessor has considered the risk factors of crucial predictive importance, and yields T-scores and percentiles that are used to classify individuals into High or Moderate/Low risk categories.

The SARA is accessible—and therefore useful—to the full range of individuals engaged in or affected by spousal assault. The SARA was developed as an assessment guide/checklist that ensures that pertinent information is considered and weighed by assessors. The instrument is systematic and comprehensive yet not of inordinate length or complexity.

User Qualifications

When the SARA is used to evaluate and make decisions about an individual, users are responsible for ensuring that their evaluation procedure conforms to the relevant laws, regulations, and policies that apply to conducting psychological assessment. The SARA users must meet MHS b-level qualification. Purchasers of b-level tests must have completed graduate-level courses in tests and measurement or have received equivalent documented training.

Because the SARA is not a controlled psychological test and is intended for use in many different contexts, there is no single set of qualifications for users. When the SARA is not used to evaluate or to make decisions about an individual (e.g., for the purposes of education, consultation, or evaluative research), fewer user qualifications are required.

Contact MHS Client Services at 1.800.456.3003 (U.S.) or 1.800.268.6011 for further information regarding the Qualification level for the SARA.

Norming

Norms were established using two groups of adult male offenders ($N = 2,309$). The first group (probationers), comprised 1,671 men from three subsamples. The second group (inmates), comprised 638 men serving aggregate custodial sentences of 2 years or longer for various offenses, most often robbery. Further description of the normative sample is presented in the SARA User's Manual.

Instrument

The SARA is an interview-based, paper-and-pencil assessment.

The assessment is based on:

- interviews with the accused and the victim(s)
- standardized measures of physical and emotional abuse
- standardized measures of drug and alcohol abuse
- review of collateral records, including police reports, victim statements, and criminal records
- other psychological assessments as required or as available

Recommendations regarding each of these components are presented in the *SARA User's Manual*.

Scientific Validation

The structural reliability of the SARA was evaluated according to Classical Test Theory indexes, including corrected item-total correlations for individual items, and internal consistency and item homogeneity correlations for composite scores. Interrater data were based solely on an interview, a review of case-history information, and Hare Psychopathy Checklist: Screening Version (PCL:SV) results.

Three separate studies were conducted to examine the criterion validity of SARA ratings. In the first study, using a known-groups strategy, SARA ratings of Inmates with a known history of spousal assault were compared to those of inmates at the same institutions who had no known history of spousal assault. Results showed that there

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Christopher D. Webster, Ph.D., & Derek Eaves, M.B.

were significant differences between inmates with and without a history of spousal assault on all 20 SARA items.

In the second study, the concurrent validity of the SARA ratings was analyzed against rating/scores on the PCL:SV, the General Statistical Information on Recidivism Scale (GSIR), and the Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (VRAG). Results showed that the PCL:SV had moderate to high correlations with all SARA items. The GSIR and VRAG had a more complex pattern of results, but which support the convergent and discriminant validity of the SARA.

The third study examined the ability of the SARA to discriminate between men who did or did not recidivate following referrals to a group treatment program for spousal assaulters. Results demonstrated that recidivistic and non-recidivistic spousal assaulters did not differ with respect to demographic characteristics or assault history.

For more information on these studies, please consult the *SARA User's Manual*.

Translations

Using our worldwide network of over 400 qualified translators with backgrounds in psychology and medicine, MHS provides accurate translations of assessments published by MHS as well as by other publishers. Please contact the MHS Translations Department at translations@mhs.com for information about available translations or for an application to translate.

Supporting Literature

Kropp, P. R., & Hart, S. D. (2000). The Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) Guide: Reliability and validity in adult male offenders. *Law and Human Behavior*, 24(1), 101–118.

Grann, M., & Wedin, I. (2002). Risk factors for recidivism among spousal assault and spousal homicide offenders. *Psychology, Crime and Law*, 8(1), 5–23.

Dutton, D. G., & Kropp, P. R. (2000). A review of domestic violence risk instruments. *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*, 1(2), 171–181.

References:

American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education. (1999). Standards for educational and psychological testing. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Complements for the SARA



Anger Disorders Scale (ADS™)
Clarke Sex History Questionnaire (SHQ-R™)
Controlling Anger and Learning How to Manage It (CALM™)
Controlling Anger and Learning How to Manage It—Effective
Relapse-Prevention Program (CALMER™)
Hare Psychopathy Scan (P-SCAN™)
Hare Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R™ 2nd Ed.)
Second Edition
Hare Psychopathy Checklist: Screening Version (PCL:SV™)
Jesness Inventory-Revised (JI-R™)
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