

# Colorado Probation Research in Brief

## *The Importance of Reassessment: How Changes in the LSI-R Risk Score Can Improve the Prediction of Recidivism*

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**Key Words:** Assessment, Rearrest, Dynamic Validity, LSI-R, Criminogenic Needs

### Summary/Conclusions

In the current study, researchers were interested in how changes in assessment scores effect rearrest. Researchers examined the change in LSI-R score from initial assessment to reassessments. Both the initial and reassessment supported the validity for probability of rearrest. For each 1% change in score of the Level of Supervision Inventory – Revised (LSI-R), there was a 1% change in the probability of rearrest for one-year following reassessment. Percent changes in criminal history, leisure/recreation, anti-social associates, and anti-social attitudes were all significant predictors of rearrest.

### Limitations of Information

The study data was collected from a Midwestern U.S. state. The study consists of predominantly white (67.6%), males (79.8%), with an average score LSI-R score of 19.7. The study period spanned 4 years. There was no consistency on when reassessments were completed. Finally, the study did not state what kind of quality assurance or scoring fidelity tools were utilized to ensure proper assessment scoring.

**Caveat:** The information presented here is intended to summarize and inform readers of research and information relevant to probation work. It can provide a framework for carrying out the business of probation as well as suggestions for practical application of the material. While it may, in some instances, lead to further exploration and result in *future* decisions, it is not intended to prescribe policy and is not necessarily conclusive in its findings. Some of its limitations are described above.

### Using Reassessment to Gauge Progress

Assessments are a vital component of effective community supervision. The current study sought to examine if changes in LSI-R assessment score (positively or negatively) affects the probability of rearrest.

The researchers utilized demographic, offense, and assessment data from 828 probationers in a Midwestern U.S. state over a 3-year period. Rearrest was tracked for 1-year following reassessment. The results indicated that both initial and reassessment were significantly predictive of rearrest. For every 1 point scored on the initial assessment, for there was a 6% increase in the odds of rearrest. On reassessment, for every 1-point score increase there was a 7% increase in the chance of rearrest.

To examine how changes in LSI-R scores were impacting outcomes, researchers examined changes from initial LSI-R score to reassessment. The study used statistical modeling to control for differences in race, age, gender, and offense type, as all were significant factors of rearrest. Results indicated that both the change in LSI-R raw score and the percentage of change were predictive of rearrest. The percentage of change proved to be more predictive as it accounted for small changes in scores for low risk probationers. The percentage model states that for every 1% score change (positively or negatively) the likelihood of rearrest differed by 1%. If a probationer had a decrease from 16 to 15, the percentage of change in score would be 1/16th or 6.25%.

Finally, the percentage change was significant for the domains of criminal history, antisocial attitude, antisocial peers, and leisure/recreation.

### Practical Applications

- ✓ Utilize assessments to target criminogenic needs with case plan goals, Carey Guides, and planned discussions.
- ✓ Consider using the Assessment Rubric to check your work and see if the probationer's criminogenic need areas are being addressed.
- ✓ When completing assessments, be sure to refer to your assessment scoring manual. This may help ensure scoring fidelity/accuracy.
- ✓ Reassessments are just as important as initial assessments. Take the time to ensure that reassessments are accurate and reflect changes.
- ✓ Reassessments can be a good way to provide strength-based feedback to probationers on areas of improvement.
- ✓ Examine reassessments for score changes. This will help you target areas that may need to be addressed.
- ✓ To ensure that reassessments are being done on time, regularly run the Reassessment Calendar report in Eclipse.
- ✓ It may be beneficial to document changes in assessment scores over time. Such information may be beneficial when deciding if early termination is appropriate.