



# Research at a glance

## Assessing the Effectiveness of the National Sexual Offender Program

**KEY WORDS:** *Treatment, Sexual Offenders, Recidivism*

### Why we did this study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Sex Offender Program (NaSOP) in reducing recidivism. The NaSOP is a cognitive-behavioural program offered to low and moderate risk male sexual offenders. The program targets a variety of criminogenic issues including cognitive distortions, deviant arousal, social skills and emotions management. The program is offered in both low and moderate intensity.

### What we did

The study examined whether sex offenders who had completed the NaSOP demonstrated reductions in recidivism when compared to groups of untreated sexual offenders. Subjects were 347 sexual offenders who had participated in NaSOP between 2000 and 2004 and 137 untreated sexual offenders who were drawn from Motiuk and Porporino's (1993) database. There was sufficient information to score the Static-99 (a measure of risk for sexual offence recidivism) on all offenders included in the study. Effectiveness was measured both by comparing treated and comparison groups in terms of rates of recidivism as well as by comparing the observed rates of recidivism for the treated subjects versus expected rates of recidivism based on the norms developed for the Static-99.

### What we found

After controlling for differences in risk level and length of follow-up between the treated and comparison groups, results indicated that there was a trend towards the treated group evidencing lower rates of sexual offence recidivism (1.1% versus 4.6%) when compared to the comparison group. Treated subjects evidenced significantly lower rates of both violent and general recidivism when compared to the comparison sample. When the observed rates of recidivism for the treated sample were compared to the predicted rates of recidivism for untreated samples based on the norms developed for the Static-99, results

indicated that, for treated subjects, the rates of sexual offence recidivism were significantly lower than those predicted by the Static-99. The observed rates of sexual offence recidivism for the comparison group were not significantly different than those predicted based on the norms developed for the Static-99.

Although no significant differences were found in terms of rates of sexual offence recidivism between the treated and comparison subjects this may be due to the low base rate of sexual offence recidivism observed in the sample. The fact that treatment and comparison groups were obtained from different cohorts makes interpretation of these data somewhat more complicated.

### What it means

Rates of recidivism for the treated sample were compared to expected rates of recidivism based on norms developed for the Static-99, results indicated that the treated group evidenced significantly lower than expected rates of sexual offence recidivism. These findings support the utility of the NaSOP Program.

### For more information

Cortoni, F. & Nunes, K.L. (2008). *Assessing the Effectiveness of the National Sexual Offender Program*. Research Report R-183. Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada.

To obtain a PDF version of the full report, contact the following address: [research@csc-scc.gc.ca](mailto:research@csc-scc.gc.ca)

**Prepared by:** Jeff Abracen

### Contact

Research Branch  
(613) 996-3287  
[research@csc-scc.gc.ca](mailto:research@csc-scc.gc.ca)

